DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 431 004 TM 029 836

AUTHOR	O'Leary, Neil
TITLE	Anchorage School District Project EXCELS 1994-97. Final Grant Report. Assessment and Evaluation Report #99-6.
INSTITUTION	Anchorage School District, AK.
SPONS AGENCY	Department of Education, Washington, DC.
PUB DATE	1999-04-00
NOTE	262p.
CONTRACT	PRR125J4243-94
PUB TYPE	Reports - Evaluative (142)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC11 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Academic Standards; Curriculum Development; Demonstration Programs; *Educational Assessment; Elementary Education; *Elementary School Teachers; *Faculty Development; Graduate Study; Grants; *National Standards; Program Evaluation; *Social Sciences
IDENTIFIERS	*Anchorage School District AK

ABSTRACT

This document describes the final grant report for the Anchorage School District (Alaska) project titled Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links among Standards (EXCELS). This grant was a demonstration project designed to provide extensive professional development related to national standards. A process was developed for bringing national standards in Geography, History, Civics, and English/Language Arts into elementary-level classrooms across the school district. Targeting all 60 of the district's elementary schools, the project attempted to prepare more than 1,100 teachers to implement standards of excellence in the designated social sciences. In addition to preparing all the teachers to deliver a new curriculum based on national and Alaska standards, the project provided a research-based experience to allow 128 teachers to transform their own approaches to teaching and learning and develop an inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning. The professional development component included graduate-level courses connected to the new curriculum. Overall, the project was successful in offering long-term, sustained professional development that supported high expectations for teachers and students. Information in 12 appendixes includes course proposals and information about the new curriculum. (Contains two figures and three tables.) (SLD)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

ED 431 004

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY
Ray Fenton
TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

ASSESSMENT AND EVALUATION

Final Grant Report of Project EXCELS 1994-1997

United States Department of Education Fund for Innovation and Education: Teacher Professional Development (PRR125J40243-94)

Prepared by:

Neil O'Leary
Dos Gatos Enterprises

Assessment and Evaluation Report #99-6
April, 1999

TM029836

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Anchorage School District and the EXCELS! staff wish to thank the U.S. Department of Education, FIE, and the Department's program staff with whom we have had the pleasure of working. This includes program officers Jaymie Lewis and Steven Rue who have been responsive to our requests and always willing to answer questions and solve problems.

The funding of Project EXCELS! has provided a tremendous professional development in standards that has improved curriculum, professional development of teachers, and student performance.

EXCELS! has changed and improved the personal and professional lives of many participants.

Anchorage School District
Project EXCELS

Final Grant Report
1994-97

This document provides the final grant report for the Anchorage School District (Alaska) Project titled **E**xtending **C**urricular **E**ffectiveness through **L**inks **A**mong **S**tandards (**EXCELS**). This three-year project, was funded through the United States Department of Education Fund for Innovation and Education: Teacher Professional Development and was assigned the number PR R125J40243-94 (95 and 96).

This grant was a demonstration project designed to provide extensive professional development related to the national standards. The project specifically addressed national standards in Geography, History, Civics, and English/Language Arts by developing a process for bringing content standards into elementary level classrooms across the Anchorage School District (ASD). In responding to the statute the project worked to address:

- national and state content standards;
- best practices research in each of the designated disciplines; and
- professional development standards as articulated by professional organizations.

To accomplish the above, the project emphasized the following elements:

- inservice for preservice and inservice teachers (graduate instruction);
- involvement of principals as instructional leaders;
- involvement of parent and community; and
- evaluation of effectiveness of the project model.

Project Site: The Anchorage School District

The Anchorage School District (ASD) is the largest school system in Alaska with approximately 40% of the state's student population. As a large urban district, it ranks as the 82nd largest school district in the United States. The ASD comprises a highly diverse student population with over 85 languages spoken among the district's nearly 50,000 students.

Project EXCELS targeted all sixty (60) of the district's elementary schools. Major activities included institute training for selected teachers; site team development for teachers, administrators, and parents; mini-grants for school -based curricular development; and cross-district inservice for all K-6 elementary faculty.

Project Goals:

The EXCELS project sought to prepare over 1,100 elementary teachers for implementation of standards of excellence in the three social sciences of Geography, History, and Civics/Government and in English/Language Arts. The project supported teachers in their roles of learner, as authentic researcher, and pedagogical expert. The project was intended to affect every student in every Anchorage classrooms. To accomplish the complex goals of the project, both leadership development and professional development were critical components.

Specific Objectives:

To accomplish the goals of this project, EXCELS embraced the following objectives:

A. prepare approximately 1,100 classroom teachers to deliver a new K-6 elementary Social Studies curriculum with themes and activities derived from the new national and Alaska standards in civics, history, and geography;

B. provide research-based experiences that allow 128 teachers from the K-6 level to transform their own approaches to learning and instruction;

C. prepare 128 teachers to develop an inquiry-based approach to learning and teaching;

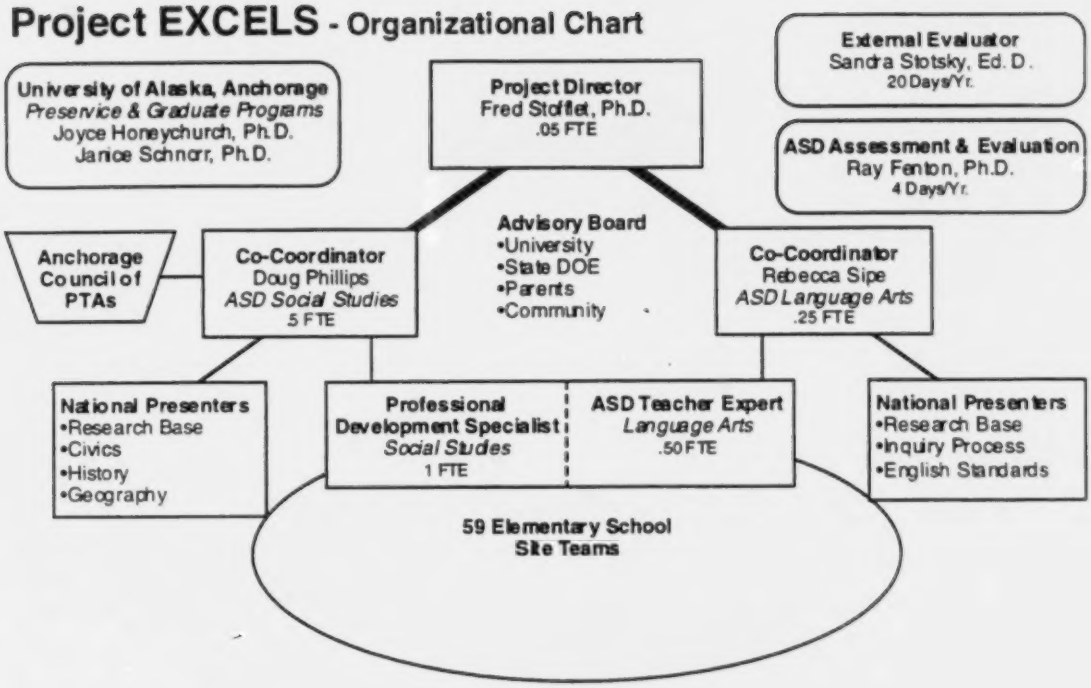
E. strengthen and develop University of Alaska Anchorage programs to build a continuum for standards implementation in classroom practice;

F. involve parents and the community in creating enhanced learning environments;

G. extend the benefits of the EXCELS institute to all 1,100 ASD elementary classrooms and all ASD students; and

H. disseminate the project's model and findings statewide and nationally.

Project EXCELS - Organizational Chart



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Project Overview 6
- Major products and activities 6
- Chronology of major events 28
- Impact Table 30

Evaluations 38
- CAT Scores 38
- Jamestown Integrated Assessment Scores 39
- Reports
  - Evaluation Report on EXCELS
    Sandra Stotsky, Ed.D 42
  - Project EXCELS, Evaluation of Institute
    Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Ed.D. 51
  - School Principals Perceptions of EXCELS' Benefits
    Joyce Honeychurch, Ph.D 68
  - The EXCELS Project: A Research Report: Interviews Conducted with 19 Classroom Teachers
    Anne E. Kruse, Ph.D. 72
  - EXCELS Teacher Interviews
    Janice M. Schnorr, Ph.D. 90
  - EXCELS Final Report: Analysis of Participant Written Products
    Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Ed.D. 116

Concluding Remarks 128

Appendices
- A. List of National Presenters
- B. EXCELS Announcement and Application Forms
- C. EXCELS Course Proposals
- D. EXCELS Institute Course Requirements
- E. EXCELS Institute Program
- F. EXCELS Principal Interviews
- G. EXCELS Teacher Interview Questions
- H. EXCELS Grading Matrices
- I. EXCELS! Evaluating Integrated Language Arts and Social Studies: The Jamestown Integrated Performance Assessment Unit
- J. Jamestown Integrated Assessment Unit – Teacher's Guide
- K. Advisory Committee
- L. Institute Bibliography

Project Overview

Objective A. Prepare approximately 1,100 classrooms teachers to deliver a new K-6 elementary Social Studies curriculum, whose themes and activities derive from the new national and Alaska standards in civics, history, and geography.

Curriculum Implementation and EXCELS Preparation. School teams (consisting of over 110 teachers) received intensive training on the Anchorage School District's new Social Studies curriculum in a week-long academy, August 15-19, 1994. These teams, in turn, provided training to all elementary teachers in a full-day inservice on August 24, 1994. All funding for this inservice was provided by the Anchorage School District. National presenters included Jack Hoar, Beth Farnbach, and Ken Rodriquez of the Center for Civic Education, Elaine Reed from the National Council for History Education, Jesus Garcia of the University of Indiana, and Charles F. Gritzner of the University of South Dakota. Project EXCELS Co-Coordinator Doug Phillips organized the week-long training session and also served as a primary presenter. A cadre of local teachers served as teacher-leaders for the academy.

On October 10, 1994, a grade-level cross-district (district-wide for all elementary teachers) inservice took place at five different schools with sessions held to address the needs identified earlier at building-level training. This training session occurred two days before a three-day teacher strike. In spite of this situation, a professional training environment and attitude prevailed and the inservice was very successful. However, the strike created difficulty in maintaining project timelines. All funding for this inservice for the 1,100 elementary teachers participating was provided by the Anchorage School District as a part of its normal curriculum adoption process.

During these in-district training opportunities, teachers were introduced to the themes of Geography, History, and Civics/Government as adopted by the Anchorage School Board. The nationally accepted five themes of Geography were drawn from The National Council for Geographic Education and the Association of American Geographers; they have been widely

disseminated by the National Geographic Society through state geographic alliances. The History themes were drawn from the Bradley Commission with additional dissemination coming from the National Council for History Education among others. The themes for Civics/Government were drawn from the Center for Civic Education and include the ideas of justice, authority, participation, responsibility, property, privacy, freedom, and diversity.

During the spring of 1995, graduate level credit courses were held for teachers in grades K, 1, 4, 5, & 6 in cooperation with Alaska Pacific University. These courses addressed the specifics of the new Social Studies curriculum at each of these grade-levels, with connections to the themes and introduction to the standards being emphasized. The courses were taught by practicing teachers in partnership with Project EXCELS grant staff, Mary Bristol and Doug Phillips. Courses for grade-levels 2 & 3 were conducted during the 1995-1996 school year because of ASD material development activities. This delay was due to the fact that the adopted materials were still in the production stage. Grade 2 materials were distributed in April, 1995 and Grade 3 materials were distributed at the beginning of the 1995-1996 school year. In excess of original grant obligations, most of the grade level courses were to be offered again during the 1995-6 school year.

Objective B. Provide research-based experiences that allow 128 teachers to transform their own approaches to learning and instruction.

and

Objective C. Prepare 128 teachers to develop an inquiry-based approach to learning and teaching.

EXCELS Institute. The EXCELS Multi-disciplinary Professional Inquiry Institute began in May, 1995, and continued throughout the 1995-96 school year. The institute was offered as a ten semester-credit block. Participants for the institute were accepted and teacher-leaders were identified during the spring of 1995.

Training sessions for the teacher-leaders were conducted on May 4 & 5, 1995 and continued throughout the 1995-96 school year. These sessions, facilitated by EXCELS staff members Mary Bristol and Barbara Bernard, were intended to preview upcoming class sessions, review research materials on change process, to develop interactive processes to support facilitating small group sessions, and to monitor/discuss/brainstorm solutions for small group issues, challenges, and difficulties.

The following individuals were trained and served as EXCELS teacher-leaders.

Alice Smith	Fairview Elementary
Janice Littlebear	Mountain View Elementary
Brain Fay	Fire Lake Elementary
Jane Sudkamp	O'Malley Elementary
Elaine Lawson	Birchwood Elementary
Julia Gibeault	Northstar Elementary
Carrie Dickey	Fire Lake Elementary
Marian Elliott	Mountain View Elementary
Joan Johnson	Alpenglow Elementary
Peggy Jones	Klatt Elementary
Kevin Spink	Mountain View Elementary
Bonnie Graham	Orion Elementary
Sally Loudermilk	Chester Valley Elementary
Cindy Forsyth	Turnagain Elementary
Kathy Hawkins	Williwaw Elementary
Cindy Martindale	Williwaw Elementary

These small groups, consisting of 12-15 teacher-participants representing a variety of grade-levels, were designed to help personalize the institute experience. Cross-grade level groupings were deliberately structured to simulate and stimulate school-based curricular conversations. Teachers remained with the same "mentor group" throughout the eighteen month institute; these groups helped teachers process new information, cope with dissonance arising from their classroom-based research, and discuss applications at the school level. During all segments of the 150 contact hours of the institute, these mentor groups were a fundamental means of enhancing communication and understanding. They also provided a means of ongoing formative evaluation for the institute.

Institute participants investigated and utilized the inquiry process as a way of developing professional knowledge and skills in Geography, History, Civics/Government, and English/Language Arts. Through phase one, teachers used inquiry processes to explore their own educational philosophy and belief systems and examine how these affect their own classrooms. Also during phase one, teachers examined the national standards movement and cross-disciplinary instruction between English/Language Arts and the Social Sciences (Geography, History, and Civics/Government). In phase two, participants explored new metaphors for learning and applied these to the task of creating new classroom learning environments with specific emphasis upon geography and Civics/Government. Phase three of the institute focused upon English/Language Arts and History and upon examining writing as a tool for articulating professional learning.

In total, the institute both facilitated melding of theory, standards, and practice and explored interdisciplinary instruction and curricular directions for the 21st century. This experience was designed to provide intensive, standards-based content information presented by nationally recognized leaders representing each discipline. Project staff and teacher-facilitators conducted sessions to help connect the various segments of the experience. The total institute provided the equivalent of 150 hours of contact time (ten semester credits).

The institute, through examination of the major objectives listed below, was intended to address the on-going professional needs of educators who wished to pursue their own growth in an aggressive contemporary manner aimed towards the state and national standards in Geography, History, Civics/Government, and English/Language Arts.

The major objectives of the institute were:

- to investigate inquiry process (inquiry as a way of knowing);
- to investigate teacher philosophy and belief systems and their impact on classrooms;
- to explore content knowledge/standards in English/Language Arts, Geography, History, Civics/Government;
- to investigate speaking, listening, reading, and writing as ways of clarifying thinking;
- to investigate processes for thinking historically, geographically, and politically;
- to practice reading and writing as a tool for articulating professional learning; and
- to meld theory and practice to foster creating thinking environments.

Presenters

Presenters for the institute included leading national figures in the standards movement and in discipline-based research (biographical notes on presenters are included as Appendix A).

Schedule of National Presenters

Summer session June 12-23, 1995	Dr. Kathy Short, University of Arizona Dr. Paul Gagnon, Boston University Rev. Dr. Michael Oleksa, University of Alaska Southeast
September 28-29, 1995	Dr. Christopher Salter, University of Missouri-Columbia Cathy Salter, Geography Consultant
Nov. 30- Dec. 2, 1995	Jack Hoar, Center for Civic Education Beth Earley Farnbach, Center for Civic Education Ken Rodriquez, Center for Civic Education
Jan. 25-27, 1996	Elaine Wrisley Reed, National Council for History Education
	Dr. Dennis Denenberg, Millersville University Dr. Arthur Zilversmit, Lake Forest College and Annette (Nancy) Taylor, Elementary teacher, Ohio.
Mar. 28-30, 1996	Dr. Miriam Chaplin, Rutgers University

Teacher-leaders from the Anchorage School District facilitated grade-level research groups of from twelve-to-fifteen teachers each. These teams collaborated throughout the year on classroom research on teaching and learning. Special Education/Inclusion trainers also met with these grade level groups. Curriculum and Assessment staff met with presenters to initiate the development of a classroom-based integrated assessment.

Summary of Institute Content. The EXCELS Institute extended over three semesters for a total of ten semester-credit hours. The course consisted of three phases conducted during the summer of 1995 and the full school year of 1995-96. This intensive training component consisted of 150 hours of classroom contact with extensive reading, classroom-based research, and professional discussions/collaborations outside the Institute. The courses were developed by EXCELS staff and approved by the University of Alaska, Anchorage for graduate level status at the 600 level (see Appendix C).

During the spring of 1995 EXCELS staff shared information about the upcoming institute in numerous school-based and district-wide meetings. Print information was also disseminated district-wide to invite ASD educators to apply for the institute (application in Appendix B). Unfortunately, the application process closely followed the teacher strike which initially affected all ASD professional development activities, including EXCELS. As a result, the enrollment for the initial summer segment was slightly below the number anticipated. This circumstance was remedied in the fall with follow-up invitations and resulted in over 140 participants. Thus, without additional charges to the grant, the number of personnel involved exceeded original grant projections by about 10% .

Teacher applications included both personal information and a reflective writing component. In their writing, teachers were required to discuss and describe their reasons for wanting to be involved, the talents they would bring to the institute, and the contributions they would be able to make. These applications were reviewed by the EXCELS staff and participants were selected based on the qualities of their responses. Not all applicants were accepted (see the application form, Appendix B). The title of the institute, Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links Among Standards, Parts I, II, and III, was approved under the educational listing Education 693 through the University of Alaska Anchorage. (A copy of the full course proposal in available in Appendix C).

1995 Institute

Part I: Eight hours of orientation to the EXCELS institute and the national standards were conducted on May 11 and May 23, 1995. The purpose of these sessions was to prepare participants for the rigors and expectations of the intensive summer seminar. Participants received course materials for pre-reading at these sessions. All participants were expected to have specified readings and writings completed prior to the start of the summer sessions on June 12th. This

allowed the EXCELS staff to initiate and maintain a fast-paced learning environment that reflected graduate quality expectations.

The summer institute met from June 12-23, 1995 and featured three key presenters: Dr. Kathy Short, Dr. Paul Gagnon, and Dr. Michael Oleksa. The first week of the institute began with Dr. Oleksa's exploration of communication patterns and implications for cross-cultural understanding. This presentation highlighted an important component of the EXCELS program because of both the diversity of teachers and students who would be affected by the project and the intense emphasis on communications found in many of the standards documents.

Dr. Short led participants in an investigation of inquiry processes as a way to develop professional knowledge. Teachers used inquiry processes to explore their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examine how these affected their own classrooms, look at issues related to curricular linkages and student learning, and investigate research models for examining practice in their own classrooms. In addition, teachers were introduced to the content of the state and national standards in language arts and reading and exemplary teaching practices were explored.

During week two Dr. Gagnon guided participants through the processes that led to the development of the national standards and created a context for inquiry and for translation of the Social Studies themes and standards into practice consistent with articulated learning theory. Dr. Gagnon also provided an introduction to the National History Standards and the controversy that existed about the content of the standards.

The institute was structured to provide divergent points of view on both standards and practice. Participants grappled with key issues related to standards implementation and educational practices and worked with multiple perspectives. Predictably, intellectual dissonance emerged as this process unfolded. EXCELS leaders recognized this dissonance as an integral component of the intellectual growth expected in the institute. Teachers were assigned to mentor groups (defined

earlier) during the first phase of the institute. These groups were created to assist individuals in addressing concerns, processing information, and discussing their own research as they moved throughout all three phases of the institute experience.

The first segment of the institute provided participants with foundational tools to begin their own classroom-based research, engage in reflective and critical inquiry into their own beliefs and practices, and explore national standards in each of the disciplines addressed in the grant through professional reading. At the conclusion of the summer phase participants were asked to submit learning logs/journals, a research proposal describing the nature of their own research question, proposed data collection procedures, and intended topics. It was understood by the EXCELS leaders that these research proposals were works in progress and would, hence, be refined in the fall.

Part II. Part II marked the inclusion of new EXCELS participants who needed to be oriented to work that had been completed over the summer. Two new mentor groups were developed to accommodate these individuals. These groups maintained the cross-grade level mix that existed in the other groups. Leaders for the new groups were drawn from the pool of teacher leaders who were identified and trained in the spring of 1995. By the conclusion of the second phase, the new participants were fully integrated into the flow and culture of the institute.

The fall started with a fifteen-hour class focused on the national standards in geography. This session was provided by Christopher and Cathy Salter. Teachers were provided extensive print materials, lectures, and hands-on information designed to both acquaint them with the national Geography standards and lead them to thinking of ways to incorporate these standards into their instruction. Presenters demonstrated meaningful linkages between instruction in Geography and the Language Arts: geo-portraits, geo-journals, and literature reflecting place themes.

A second fifteen-hour component focused on the Civics/Government standards. Teachers were provided with books, materials, interactive strategies, and opportunities for discussion. This session reflected the benefits of the long-term working relationship between the Anchorage School District and the Center for Civic Education, developer of the National Standards in Civics/Government. A highlight of the session was the involvement of all teacher-participants in multiple mock trials conducted in the Alaska State Court House with the assistance and support of the Alaska Bar Association.

Woven among standards presentations, and extending across Phase II and III, were sessions that provided time to interact with local university professors. Teacher-leaders and local facilitators examined their own classrooms, compiled data related to their instructional questions, and discussed their findings, concerns, and further questions in research groups. A total of fifteen hours per semester was dedicated to these activities. In addition, teachers were expected to dedicate a substantial number of hours to reading and summarizing research. At the conclusion of this phase participants submitted a second paper documenting their research and thinking regarding standards implementation up to this point.

Part III. The spring block included a fifteen hour class focused on the national history standards. This session was offered by national and local experts with the assistance of the National Council for History Education. National presenters included Dr. Arthur Zilversmit, Dr. Dennis Denenberg, Nancy Taylor, Elaine Reed and Joseph Ribar. Teachers were provided with extensive print materials, lectures, demonstrations, and the experts facilitated discussions to fuel inquiry into history and the language arts. This session provided meaningful examples of thematic instruction (e.g. heroes or the Depression) as a method for addressing standards.

The final class was provided by the President of the National Council of Teachers of English, Dr. Miriam Chaplin, who focused on the English/Language Arts standards. Teachers were provided

with extensive print materials, lectures, and interactive group work, and dramatic presentations to fuel discussion about classroom practice. Dr. Chaplin presented the history of the standards development and the highly diverse perspectives about national standards in English/Language Arts. Further, she helped teachers understand the stark differences in philosophy that currently exist in the discipline.

A major task for EXCELS staff during this final semester of the institute was to help participants draw all of these intellectual tools and standards together for application in their own classrooms and to begin thinking of methods for sharing their findings with others. To accomplish classroom implementation, facilitated grade-level groups linking EXCELS findings to local curriculum in the social sciences and in language arts were conducted.

To draw upon the expertise of the institute graduates, participants were encouraged to play leadership roles in EXCELS site teams that were established in elementary schools. In addition, selected EXCELS participants worked with EXCELS staff to begin preparing for districtwide dissemination of the project.

Extensive summative evaluation of the institute phase of the grant was conducted and is reported later in this paper.

Objective D. Provide an external support system for teachers to create model learning environments:

Management Academies. Management academies are a training mechanism commonly used in the Anchorage School District to train building principals at the elementary level. EXCELS provided several management academy training sessions with national presenters during their visit to Anchorage. The first of these was in May, 1995, with The Rev. Dr. Michael Oleksa concerning intercultural communications which address language arts Alaska 2000 standards. Additional

management academies of the 1995-1996 school year focused on content standards in the disciplines.

National presenters familiar with the national standards projects continued these efforts through a variety of training efforts in the Anchorage School District. These presenters included Miriam Chapman (Language Arts); Christopher and Cathy Salter (Geography); representatives from the Center for Civic Education (Civics); and Gary Nash (History). Dr. Nash was included as a trainer in August, 1995 as part of an Anchorage School District secondary inservice and he also presented to EXCELS teachers in an extended training opportunity at no additional cost to the grant.

State and National Standards Process Involvement. EXCELS staff were heavily involved with Alaska Content Standards development activities conducted by the Alaska Department of Education. Doug Phillips, EXCELS Co-Coordinator, served on the Oversight Committee for the Alaska 2000 program. Mary Bristol, Professional Development Specialist, served on the Social Studies Frameworks Committee for Alaska 2000. Both also served as co-chairs of the Civics/Government Standards Development Committee for the State of Alaska. Rebecca Bowers Sipe, EXCELS Co-Coordinator, served on Alaska's English/Language Arts Standards Development Committee. These committees developed the content standards and supporting resources for Alaska's teachers in Social Studies and Language Arts.

Rebecca Bowers Sipe served a responder to the National Standards in English/Language Arts and Doug Phillips, the President of the National Council for Geographic Education, served as NCGE's observer to the National Geography Standards process. He was also involved in numerous national efforts which are detailed later. Finally, he served as a respondent to the Civics/Government standards and the pending international Civics/Government standards.

To further enhance the EXCELS implementation environment, training and information sessions were also provided to the Language Arts and Social Studies Curriculum Committees, all Anchorage principals, the Central Council of PTA, local school PTAs, EXCELS site teams, school site staff meetings, local university staff, and in other venues.

EXCELS Mini-grants. A competitive mini-grant system provided another avenue for helping schools to enhance the implementation of Project EXCELS at the school/program level. Applications were submitted and reviewed by the EXCELS staff with the following schools selected to receive mini-grants:

EXCELS Mini-grant sites

	Principal	Contact Teacher
Bear Valley	Kevin Hoyer	Janet Nichols
Bilingual dept.	Maxine Hill	LaVon Bridges
Campbell	Michele Stickney	Nancy MacDonald
		Deneen Bozeman
Denali K-8	Karen Rigg	Diane Gilila
Eagle River	Joanne McCabe	Bev Legler
Fire Lake	Linda Connelly	Brian Fay
Government Hill	Sandy Stephens	Jean Musser
Lake Otis	Lace Stanaland	Stephanie Begich
		Kristina Peterson
Orion	Kathi Humble	Bonnie Graham
Ravenwood	Barry Geller	Lisa Weight
Scenic Park	Beverly Pruitt	Darren Dean
Turnagain	Nancy Carder	Cindy Forsyth
Tyson	John Kito	Judith Burtner

Not all schools who applied were selected to receive mini-grants during the 1995-96 school year. Projects ranged from staff development work sessions based upon standards-focused delivery models with the entire school staff in one school to another school where a community-wide multicultural focus was used to address standards-based instruction.

Objective E. Strengthen and develop new college programs to build a continuum for standards implementation in classroom practice.

The ten-credit institute offered through the University of Alaska Anchorage in 1995-96 was the most comprehensive course ever initiated by the Anchorage School District through UAA. Generally, the school district offers one credit, special topics courses which fail to provide the level of in-depth, sustained learning that was reflected in the EXCELS institute. Unique to this endeavor as well was the involvement of one full time methods professor from the University of Alaska Southeast as a fully participating fellow throughout the institute.

University of Alaska Anchorage and Alaska Pacific University's faculties participated in many EXCELS planning and training activities. A number of faculty members served on the EXCELS Advisory Committee. Representatives from UAA included by Dr. Wayne Miller, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences; Dr. Alex MacNeil, Dean of the School of Education; Dr. Janice Schnorr, Interim Dean, School of Education; Dr. Steven Haycox, Professor, History Department; and Dr. Joyce Honeychurch, Associate Professor, School of Education. Thus, this membership involved both the School of Education and the College of Arts and Sciences which served both preservice teachers and practitioners.

Dr. Diana Caldwell, a member of the EXCELS Advisory Board from Alaska Pacific University, worked collaboratively with Chester Valley Elementary School to develop a grant for linking Social Studies, EXCELS standards training, and inquiry processes with technology. The grant was one of only twelve funded nationally by Apple Computers that year. With this grant student teachers from APU partnered with EXCELS teachers from Chester Valley, as a part of their methods and student teaching experience.

Dr. Janice Schnorr offered a course in qualitative analysis of classroom effectiveness in the spring of 1996 which sought to provide UAA students the opportunity to observe and evaluate teaching

practices. She was involved extensively in EXCELS audio-conferences with Dr. Sandra Stotsky, the grant's external evaluator, concerning our evaluation procedures and helped to shape both the evaluation processes and instruments.

Dr. Joyce Honeychurch worked extensively planning, shaping, and gathering evaluative data from principals of EXCELS schools. She provided ongoing consultation to EXCELS Co-Coordiators throughout the project. Her findings are reported in the Assessment section of this document.

Dr. Ann Kruse visited EXCELS sites, interviewed EXCELS teachers, and provided ongoing support to internal qualitative evaluation activities. Evaluations with staff were conducted in May, 1997 and provided vital baseline data for Project EXCELS. Her findings are reported in the Assessment section of this document.

Many spin-offs have taken place as a result of partnerships among local universities and EXCELS teacher participants and staff who have taught language arts and Social Studies methods courses at both of the local universities. Additional university workshop courses have been offered by EXCELS teachers and EXCELS have spurred many teacher-participants to pursue advanced degree programs. Later, during districtwide dissemination, these individuals as well as numerous others were involved in ongoing teacher training. Credit classes for teachers and preservice teachers have become important elements of the EXCELS training.

Objective F. Involve parents and the community in creating enhanced learning environments.

Presentations were made to the Anchorage PTA Central Council concerning Project EXCELS with discussion and collaboration on activities following. For example, one discussion focused upon inclusion of parents on school site teams. Others focused upon the development of a parent packet for the new Social Studies curriculum and the possibility of community access to national

presenters of the EXCELS institute. Connections to school newsletters and presentations to local PTAs were discussed. Two key members of the PTA Central Council were represented on the EXCELS Advisory Board.

Objective G. Extend the benefits of the EXCELS Institute to all 1,100 ASD elementary classrooms and all ASD students.

The primary aims of this objective were realized in the second and third years of this grant. Efforts focused on developing a strong training cadre from EXCELS participants for use in inservice training, additional credit courses, and other training models that were used.

Jamestown Integrated Assessment Unit. The difficulty of assessing student performance related to standards-based expectations in reading, writing, speaking, and listening within the context of the Social Studieson standardized multiple choice tests was recognized from the onset of the EXCELS project. To meet this need, meetings were held of Language Arts teachers and Social Studies teachers in the summer of 1995 to investigate the possibility of developing an integrated assessment unit directly keyed to the standards and Anchorage curriculum for the fourth grade. During the next two years, the Jamestown Integrated Assessment unit was created and refined. More than seventy individuals were involved in the development of the Jamestown Unit. A pilot administration of the assessment was given in the spring of 1996. Since then, the assessment has been given in the spring of each year, and results have been examined by a committee of teachers each summer.

After extended discussion of the design of the assessment unit between the EXCELS Core Team and ASD Assessment staff, it was decided that the unit would consist of a number of lessons with imbedded assessments consistent with the social studies content. Student work would be collected in a student journal similar in form to a laboratory notebook. Assessment tasks were reviewed for their linkage to curriculum, focus, simplicity and propriety. The evaluation of assessment materials and strategies continues each year. The Teacher's Guide to administration and scoring of the

Jamestown Unit provides a sense of the scope and goals of the assessment. The Teacher's Guide is included with this submission as Appendix J. Comparative student scores for the first three years of the Assessment's administration are included in the Evaluation section of this paper. A full report on the development and application of the Jamestown Integrated Assessment Unit was presented to the annual American Educational Research Association meeting in San Diego, California, 1998, and is included in this report as Appendix I.

EXCELS Day/October 14, 1996. During the spring of 1996, intensive grade level work among EXCELS teachers and under the facilitation of EXCELS staff, resulted in numerous representations of thematically organized, integrated, standards-based classrooms. Teachers and EXCELS staff worked throughout the summer to hone presentations and refine materials to share with all elementary teachers in a much anticipated districtwide inservice. This session was scheduled for October 14, 1996.

The October 14th inservice offered teachers and administrators the richest and most diverse array of professional sessions ever amassed in the district. Situated on the campus of Bartlett High School, a campus that houses over 2,000 students, the EXCELS Day literally took over the school, using every classroom, the library, and both cafeterias. Advanced materials had been mailed out to schools and were simultaneously presented to principals. As a result, anticipation and expectations were extremely high.

In true Alaskan fashion, snow started to fall on October 12th. Ten out of state presenters arrived on Saturday and Sunday and the snow...continued to fall. Over seventy EXCELS teacher presenters and local university presenters prepared for Monday's inservice and the snow continued to fall. EXCELS Co-Coordinator, Doug Phillips, called district facilities and administrators to be sure parking lots were cleared...and the snow continued to fall. Monday morning arrived with 26 inches of new snow on the ground as presenters were greeted at the door of the school by

EXCELS staff who had been on site for hours...and the snow continued to fall! By 8:00 am approximately 1,100 teachers were registered, on site, and excited to begin their day! One geographic field trip with Dr. Kit Salter was canceled in the morning but in true Alaskan fashion the field trip operated on schedule in the afternoon with 50 well-bundled participants. The only casualty for the day was the injury of one teacher who fell and broke her hip in the parking lot.

As teachers arrived at the inservice site they were greeted by registration volunteers provided by students from UAA and APU under the supervision of EXCELS teachers. Participants were given an impressive packet of materials including:

- a one page summary of all sessions
- an annotated program for the day (a draft had been forwarded to school earlier)
- the EXCELS bibliography
- state content standard synopses English
- national content standard synopses in Civics/Government
- national content standard synopses English/Language Arts
- national content standard synopses for World History 4-10
- national content standard synopses for history K-4
- national content standard synopses for geography standards
- ASD Social Studies curriculum, K-6
- ASD English/Language Arts curriculum, K-6
- K-6 Social Studies Literature Annotated Bibliography
- K-6 Social Studies Annotated List of Core Themes
- EXCELS day evaluation sheet

This inservice day represented an impressive collection of EXCELS expertise. Teachers who initially were hesitant to stand up in small groups and present materials and who quaked at the thought of putting words on paper, stood before their peers and shared innovative and exciting ideas. These teachers represented diverse cultures and backgrounds. Every session wove together standards from the social sciences and the English/Language Arts. Many reflected an inquiry-based model of instruction. Numerous strategies including mock trials, interactive discussions, literature discussion strategies, geo-portraits, learning logs and journals, dramatic presentations, literature-based units, technology applications, field trips and more were shared (see Appendix E for the complete program). While national presenters did a superb job, teacher evaluations also proved extraordinarily positive for peer presentations as well (see the Kruse and Schnorr reports in the Exaluation section of this paper).

Dissemination of Materials. Print materials were provided to all elementary schools during the last year of the grant. Awareness training for principals on national standards documents was completed prior to materials being sent to schools. In addition to national standards documents, synopses of those documents were created by EXCELS staff. These synopsis materials were provided to principals as a source of information for unit-level sharing. Later, the synopses were included in teacher packets for the districtwide inservice on EXCELS. In some cases, principals chose to purchase full copies of standards for each teacher in the school. For example, Shannon Jones, principal of Oceanview Elementary School, provided her entire staff with copies of the National Geography Standards.

School-based planning. Using the Social Studies themes mentioned earlier and the process-oriented, literature-based program in English/Language Arts, many of the elementary schools based their school goals on the themes of the Social Studies Adoption and on reading and literature, weaving the two major disciplines together. This continued and extended the phase of developing content perspectives in Geography, History and Civics/Government and helped as the district made the transition from themes to standards. Teachers continuously made connections between the curricular areas of Social Studies, language arts, science, and math.

EXCELS site teams also served as a dissemination devices to all teachers. Staff meetings around EXCELS ideas, inservices, management practices, and school programs and other school-based activities designed by the site team were carried out for the benefit of all staff, students, and the community.

During the 1997-1998 school year the Anchorage School District started the process of identifying local standards in language arts and the social sciences for grades K-8. Draft documents were generated for language arts and Social Studies and a special day-long meeting was held to discuss

the standards and development process with the Anchorage School Board. This session provided the initial approval needed to formally move forward with ASD standards development for grades K-8. Further development in standards for reading, language arts, and math will take place in the 1998-9 school year with the Social Studies and other curriculum areas to follow.

Objective H. Disseminate the project's model and findings statewide and nationally.

EXCELS presentations were made at the National Council for the Social Studies annual meetings in November, 1995, 1996, and 1997 at Chicago, Washington, D.C. and Cincinnati by Doug Phillips and EXCELS participants. These sessions focused upon both the processes and content used by Project EXCELS and the sessions were well attended. EXCELS was also presented at the state conference of the Alaska Council for Social Studies in April 1996 and again in 1997 at Bethel, Alaska by Mary Bristol.

Doug Phillips served on the Geography National Implementation Program (GENIP) Task Force which was responsible for developing an integrated implementation plan for the National Geography Standards. He served as a keynote presenter at the Geography Summit held in San Marcos, Texas and also participated in the National Law Related Education Summit sponsored by the American Bar Association and held in Austin, Texas. In addition, he served as one of the two non-attorney members of the American Bar Association's Special Committee on Youth Education for Citizenship which discussed the impact and implementation of the national standards.

An EXCELS presentation entitled "Voices Behind the Standards" was offered by Rebecca Sipe at the annual meeting of the National Council of Teachers of English in Chicago in 1996. This session reflected a research-base gathered from teachers and teacher-leaders who were involved in the conceptualization of teaching models for actually bringing standards in multiple disciplines into the classrooms. It also highlighted current findings on essential elements of successful professional development.

During the spring of 1997, Rebecca Sipe provide a discussion of EXCELS observations at the National Council of Teachers of English Spring Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Additional NCTE presentations were provided by Rebecca Sipe at the annual conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico in the spring of 1998.

Sessions have also been conducted by Doug Phillips at the annual meeting of the National Council for Geographic Education for conference presentations on EXCELS during the second year of the grant. An additional session on the Jamestown evaluation unit was conducted at the American Educational Research Association (AERA) in the spring of 1998 by Ray Fenton, Fred Stofflet and others. Additional presentations, given around the nation, have also included aspects of EXCELS work without costs being incurred by the grant. Some examples of these additional presentations are those made at the Pacific Basin Close Up Program in Honolulu, a two-day multiple district training meeting in Western Michigan, and a keynote address in South Dakota. We also recognize that this outreach by staff and participants will continue long after the grant has expired. Examples of this include project co-coordinator Dr. Rebecca Sipe who now has moved on to Eastern Michigan University and incorporates the EXCELS findings into her graduate and undergraduate courses. Doug Phillips, EXCELS co-coordinator, continues to incorporate EXCELS into his training and keynote work across the U.S. He also applies these principles to the work in training that he is doing in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Russia and other locations around the world and in his active review of the International standards in Civics and Government now being prepared by the Center for Civic Education.

The Alaska State Department of Education has now developed and disseminated standards within the state. The Anchorage School District played an active role in disseminating the work of Project EXCELS throughout the state in collaboration with the Alaska Department of Education. Two members of the EXCELS Advisory Committee were from the Alaska State Department of

Education. This ensured a close working relationship on standards-related activities. In addition, Doug Phillips, Mary Bristol, and Rebecca Sipe have fulfilled their integral involvement in the Alaska 2000 project and National Standards development as previously stated under Objective D.

EXCELS staff also made numerous presentations in pre-service and graduate level courses concerning curriculum development and moving from themes to standards. Presentations were also repeatedly made to the Language Arts and Social Studies Curriculum Committees regarding the connections and the goals of the EXCELS project.

Project EXCELS

Chronology of Activities

and

Impact Review

The following table lists the activities of Project EXCELS in the Anchorage School District from the project's inception to the submission of the final report.

The columns of the table represent the following:

Date. A date or time frame is provided for each activity is provided in column 1.

Activity. The major activities connected with Project EXCELS are identified and listed chronologically in column 2.

Objective. The objectives targeted for each of the activities are identified and listed in column 3. The objectives (as outlined in the introductory section) are as follows:

EXCELS Objectives

A. Prepare teachers to deliver the new social studies curriculum which derives from state and national standards in Civics, History, and Geography.

B. Provide research-based experiences.

C. Prepare teachers to develop an inquiry-based approach to learning and teaching.

D. Provide an external support system for teachers to create model learning environments.

E. Strengthen and develop new college programs to build a continuum for standards implementation in classroom practice.

F. Involve parents and the community in creating enhanced learning environments.

G. Extend the benefits of the institute to all ASD elementary classrooms and students.

H. Disseminate the project's model and findings statewide and nationally.

Where an objective applies to a particular activity, it is included by its reference letter, as above.

Question. Questions have been developed for evaluation of the project. These are listed in column 4 as appropriate. The questions used are as follows:

Questions

1. Were all of the activities implemented effectively?

2. Was professional development conducted according to the standards and philosophies set forth in the project plan: Did it demonstrate underlying philosophies in support of standards, of the belief that all children can learn, and of findings that knowledge is constructed from experience?

3. Did the teachers adopt an inquiry/constructivist approach to their own learning and the new curriculum?

4. Did student products increasingly reflect the national and state content standards in Civics/Government, History, Geography and English/Language Arts?

5. Did University preservice and graduate programs begin to reflect the standards?

6. Did administrators become instructional leaders in new approaches?

7. Did parents and community members participate in standards implementation?

8. Did the model have state and national impact?

Where a question is used for evaluation of a particular activity, it is included by its reference number, as above.

Outcome. The outcome of a particular evaluation is noted.

Project EXCELS

Chronology of Activities

and

Impact Review

The following table lists the activities of Project EXCELS in the Anchorage School District from the project's inception to the submission of the final report.

The columns of the table represent the following:

Date. A date or time frame is provided for each activity is provided in column 1.

Activity. The major activities connected with Project EXCELS are identified and listed chronologically in column 2.

Objective. The objectives targeted for each of the activities are identified and listed in column 3. The objectives (as outlined in the introductory section) are as follows:

EXCELS Objectives

A. Prepare teachers to deliver the new social studies curriculum which derives from state and national standards in Civics, History, and Geography.

B. Provide research-based experiences.

C. Prepare teachers to develop an inquiry-based approach to learning and teaching.

D. Provide an external support system for teachers to create model learning environments.

E. Strengthen and develop new college programs to build a continuum for standards implementation in classroom practice.

F. Involve parents and the community in creating enhanced learning environments.

G. Extend the benefits of the institute to all ASD elementary classrooms and students.

H. Disseminate the project's model and findings statewide and nationally.

Where an objective applies to a particular activity, it is included by its reference letter, as above.

Question. Questions have been developed for evaluation of the project. These are listed in column 4 as appropriate. The questions used are as follows:

Questions

1. Were all of the activities implemented effectively?

2. Was professional development conducted according to the standards and philosophies set forth in the project plan: Did it demonstrate underlying philosophies in support of standards, of the belief that all children can learn, and of findings that knowledge is constructed from experience?

3. Did the teachers adopt an inquiry/constructivist approach to their own learning and the new curriculum?

4. Did student products increasingly reflect the national and state content standards in Civics/Government, History, Geography and English/Language Arts?

5. Did University preservice and graduate programs begin to reflect the standards?

6. Did administrators become instructional leaders in new approaches?

7. Did parents and community members participate in standards implementation?

8. Did the model have state and national impact?

Where a question is used for evaluation of a particular activity, it is included by its reference number, as above.

Outcome. The outcome of a particular evaluation is noted.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

Date	Activity	Objective	Evaluation Question	Outcome Reported
August 15-19, 1994	EXCELS Academy	A, B	1, 2, 3, 6	Activities implemented as planned with positive responses from participants and indications of application of new knowledge.
October 10, 1994	Cross-District Grade-Level Inservice	A, B, C	1,2,6,7	Participation of more than 1,100 teachers parents and administrators. New standards and methods introduced.
Spring 1995	Pre-Institute Materials Distributed	A	1,2	Print materials on standards and instructional methods directly related to developing curriculum and integration of instruction.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

Spring 1995	Graduate Level Courses w/APU Grades K,1,4, 5&6	A, E	1,2,3,4,5	Courses are revised to reflect national standards. Teachers and administrators develop curriculum, learn new methods, and examine the impact on students.
April, 1995	Grade 2 Materials Distributed	A, D	1,3,6	New materials support revised curriculum and instruction.
May, 1995	Multi-Disciplinary Professional Inquiry Institute	A, B, C	1,2,3,6	Participants develop successful methods to integrate curriculum and apply constructivist principals.
May 4&5, 1995	Teacher Leader Training	D	1,2,3,6	Individuals learn and apply methods to bring integrated standards based instruction into their schools.
May 11&23, 1995	Institute Sessions	A, B, C	1,2,3,6	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

Summer 1995	Meetings with Teachers in Language Arts and Social Studies to Develop Jamestown Assessment	A, G	1,2,3,4	New Assessment Unit developed to model standards based instruction and allows students to demonstrate knowledge and skill.
June 12-23, 1995	Institute Sessions	A, B, C	1,2,3,6	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction.
August, 1995	G. Nash at Secondary Inservice	A	1,2,6	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction.
1995-96 year	Courses Developed for Grades 2-3	G	1,2,3	Curriculum and materials change to align with standards and constructivist learning cycle.
1995-96 year	Jamestown Unit Developed	A, G	1,2,3,4	New Assessment Unit. Excel teachers learn to conduct integrated standards based assessments.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

1995-96 year	EXCELS mini-grants distributed	D	1,2,3,4,6,7	Teacher leaders, administrators, and classroom teachers create site teams to integrate instruction and develop curriculum at the school level.
Fall 1995	Grade 3 Materials Distributed	A, G	1,2,3	Curriculum and materials change to align with standards and constructivist learning cycle.
September 28-29, 1995	Institute Session (Phase 2)	A, C	1,2,3,6	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction. New teachers are added to the group.
November 30-December 3, 1995	Institute Session	A, C	1,2,3,6	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction. Teachers document and share student work and implementation.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

January 25-27, 1996	Institute Session	A, C	1,2,3	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction.
March 28-30, 1996	Institute Session	A, C	1,2,3	Individuals come to better understand national standards and apply them to curriculum and instruction.
April, 1996	Jamestown Assessment Pilot	A, G	1,2,3,4	Pilot extended to a random selection of teachers. Successful implementation reflects growing understanding of standards based assessment.
Spring 1996	Schnorr Course in Quantitative Analysis	A	5	Course documents and reflects positive assessment standards based approach on classroom practice.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

Spring 1997	Jamestown Assessment Administered	A, G	1,2,3,4	Pilot extended to a random selection of teachers. School Board examines results as an indicator of student success.
May 1997	Evaluation: Schnorr Interviews	G	1,2,3,4	Outside evaluator collects impact information from teachers.
May, 1997	Evaluation: Kruse Interviews	G	1,2,3,4	Outside evaluator collects impact information from teachers.
May, 1997	Evaluation: Honeychurch Interviews	G	1,2,3,6,7	Outside evaluator collects impact information from principals.
August, 1997	Kruse Report	G,H	1,2,3,4	Report finds systemic impact on curriculum and instruction.
September, 1997	Schnorr report	G,H	1,2,3,4,5	Report finds impact on teacher knowledge and instruction.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

September, 1997	Stotsky report	G,H	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	Senior Outside Evaluator finds successful implementation of the model, growth on the part of teachers and administrators, improved instructional practices and improved student performance.
1997-98 Year	ASD Works Toward Identifying Language Arts and Social Studies Standards	F	7,8	Teachers and public join to make national standards and standards based instruction district policy.
1998	Report on Jamestown Assessment Presented to Annual AERA Meeting	H		National report on the success of standards based integrated assessment.
Spring 1998	Jamestown Assessment Administered	A, G		Implementation of Excels project standards based evaluation is continued.

EXCELS Impact Table

1994-1999

September 1998	Honeychurch Report			Curriculum and standards based instruction continues. There is a continuing need for teacher development and training.
Spring 1999	Jamestown Assessment Administered	A, G	1,2,4	Implementation of Excels project standards based assessment is continued.
1995-1999	EXCELS findings and observations disseminated nationally and internationally by EXCELS staff	H	8	Presentations are made at state and national social studies, language arts, and assessment meetings. Materials are included in the ERIC system.
April 21, 1999	ASD Board Adopts Language Arts Standards	G	7	Standards based instruction becomes the expectation for all ASD Teachers.
April 21, 1999	ASD Board Commits to Adoption of Social Studies Standards in 1999-2000 Academic Year	G	7	Anchorage School Board continues commitment to standards based curriculum and integration of areas.

Project EXCELS and District-Wide Scores
CAT and Jamestown Assessment Instruments

California Achievement Test comparisons. The California Achievement Test (CAT) includes 5 20-item Social Studies Tests. All Anchorage students in grades 3-6 take the tests each spring, allowing a comparison of student gains for schools participating in EXCELS. Overall performance for the Anchorage School District is well above the national average. The tables below show the NCE gain scores for schools with different levels of EXCELS participation.

CAT GAINS – ALL STUDENTS

	General	School Plan	Mini-Grant
TRGN97	2	1	3
TRGN98	1	2	3
TLGN97	1	2	3
TLGN98	1	2	3
SSGN97	2	1	3
SSGN98	1	3	2

CAT GAINS – CONTINUING STUDENTS

	General	School Plan	Mini-Grant
TRGN97	2	3	1
TRGN98	1	2	3
TLGN97	1	2	3
TLGN98	1	2	3
SSGN97	3	1	2
SSGN98	1	3	2

All schools had staff participation. Some schools developed plans for integration of curriculum. Some schools developed plans and special site-level activities that were supported by mini-grants. In general, the greater the involvement level at the individual site, the greater the gains on the California Achievement Social Studies Test.

Jamestown Integrated Assessment. A substantial number of students participated in the Jamestown Integrated Language Arts and Social Studies Assessment in the final three years of the project. The assessment scoring was based on the options of trained teachers using rubrics and examples of student performance to classify students. (See Appendix J for a copy of the Jamestown Integrated Assessment Teacher's Guide, which includes the rubrics.)

Jamestown Integrated Assessment
Comparative Scores, 1996-1998

Area/Year	Number Tested	Less Than Mastery	Mastery*	Greater Than Mastery
Listening				
1996	273	30%	70%	12%
1997	314	52%	49%	14%
1998	498	28%	72%	6%
Map Making				
1996	80	15%	85%	18%
1997	328	46	54%	13%
1998	466	46	54%	11%
Reading				
1996	106	18%	82%	11%
1997	328	27%	74%	35%
1998	467	27%	73%	43%
Writing Ideas & Content				
1996	50	26%	74%	23%
1997	327	37%	63%	24%
1998	407	34%	66%	27%
Writing Conventions				
1996	46	50%	50%	19%
1997	328	39%	62%	26%
1998	409	36%	54%	26%

*this category includes students who performed at a level "greater than mastery".

Year-to-year results can not be directly compared between 1996 and the other two years of the project. In 1996 only students in classes taught by EXCELS volunteer teachers were included. The rubrics and scoring guides were also revised prior to the 1997 scoring to reflect higher expectation for students in map making.

The goal of the Jamestown Integrated Assessment was to have 75% of students demonstrate mastery of listening, map making, reading, and writing skills. The students made progress in listening and showed strong performance in reading and writing: ideas and content. Performance in map making and use of writing conventions was below expectation and continues to be monitored.

A full review of the validity and reliability of the Jamestown Integrated Assessment Unit is available as an ERIC document (TM 028359).

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

PHILOSOPHY OF EDUCATION RESEARCH CENTER

Evaluation report on EXCELS for the Anchorage Public Schools

Submitted by Sandra Stotsky, Ed.D.

September 1997

Timetable for the Site Visit and Sources of Information for this Report

My site visit as external evaluator spanned three days, from Tuesday, May 12, to Thursday, May 14. The schedule that had been planned for me enabled me to gather information about all facets of the project. The information that I draw on for this report comes from:

---several formal and informal meetings with Fred Stofflet, Ray Fenton, Douglas Phillips, Rebecca Sipe, Mary Bristol, and Barbara Bernard.

—a meeting with a large group of teacher leaders--all classroom teachers--to find out from them what they saw as the most positive influences of EXCELS on their teaching.

—a meeting with Anne Kruse, Joyce Honeychurch, and Jan Schnorr to find out what they were each doing and how each was proceeding in the process of collecting data for their own evaluation focus.

--an observation of a sixth grade classroom doing a World War II newspaper project.

--a visit to Scenic Park Elementary School, a school that had received a mini-grant; Iwas able to meet after school with the principal and the teachers who were part of the project, see some examples of student writing, and examine their joint curriculum notebook filled with lesson plans.

--a visit to one session of an inservice course related to the project's goals.

--an examination of the materials prepared for the summer institutes.

--an examination of the Jamestown assessment materials prepared for the end of fourth grade.

Purposes of the Project according to its Curriculum Directors

According to a brief summary of the project's purposes by Douglas Phillips and Rebecca Sipe at one of our meetings, EXCELS was designed to serve two major purposes: to help teachers link the English language arts with the social sciences in the elementary schools, and to help them connect inquiry skills with existing national and state standards in the two disciplines. EXCELS sought to promote teaching and learning in the social sciences by raising teachers' awareness of the specific content of both the social sciences and the language arts in the elementary school curriculum, by showing teachers how to shape their classroom lessons more consciously and consistently around the content of these two areas, and by giving teachers opportunities for directing and reflecting on their own professional growth, alone and together with their colleagues. Teachers more oriented to process were to become more oriented to drawing on content and using standards when thinking about curriculum goals and planning classroom activities.

With these purposes for the project in mind, my report organizes the information I obtained from the sources outlined above to address the following questions:

1. Did the participants link the two disciplines and in what ways?
2. Did the participants draw on national and state standards?
3. Did the project contribute to teacher growth?

Findings

1. Linkage between the two disciplines in the classroom curriculum was visible in the classroom projects I was able to see, in the projects described to me by the teacher leaders and curriculum specialists, and in the Jamestown assessment materials, which are still undergoing development. The World War II newspaper unit, which I saw grade 6 students undertaking, was a fine example of group work, the use of technology to gather information on various aspects of World War II, and the inquiry, reading, and writing skills needed for creating a mock newspaper. The classroom as museum project, as described to me by Mary Bristol and Barbara Bernard, was another fine

example of a project connecting the two disciplines. In this project, students act as experts on the items in the "museum" that relate to the classroom theme, in one case a Civil War Museum. The meeting with the teacher leaders corroborated my necessarily limited observations and what Mary Bristol and Barbara Bernard had described to me. These teachers also elaborated in great detail the benefits of EXCELS for their own classroom teaching. Many noted they had engaged in more projects that began with student inquiry, more projects altogether (especially projects relating to immigration and family journeys), and more field trips to help students gain a better sense of history and to help them raise new questions.

The two primary means by which the teachers incorporated more social science content into their curricula, so far as I could determine, were the use of projects for organizing a series of classroom activities and the use of their new social science textbooks. Projects have been recommended for relatively easy for a well-organized classroom teacher in a self-contained classroom to undertake. What determines the real value of a project are its goals and specific learning activities, how well it fits into the ongoing curriculum for the year, how much each individual student learns, and how well student time is spent during the course of the project. These have always been noted as the potential weaknesses in a project-oriented classroom. Awareness and careful monitoring by the teacher, principal, and curriculum supervisor help reduce or avoid these weaknesses. I have no information on how teachers or others judged their projects on all these grounds. The teacher leaders who reported on their projects found them useful and interesting learning activities for their students and described them with great enthusiasm.

Many of the teacher leaders also indicated that they used their new social science textbook as the point of departure for a project. This is probably the best way to ensure that a project fits into a larger, more coherent curricular framework. What was not clear to me, however, was how much they drew on the textbook. Coverage of each unit at a particular grade level seemed to be optional. Some teachers seemed to do more than others with the material in the textbook. That is, some gave

the progression of historical material in the textbook a more central role than others did. However, they were still able to find ways to make connections with the language arts. For example, one upper grade elementary school teacher leader noted the use of small group discussions of literary texts that were related in theme or content to the period of time being studied. It is possible that her students might have developed a more substantial knowledge base for a broader period of historical time than others. On the other hand, the trade-off might be that students who spent more time on projects developed a more substantial knowledge base about the specific focus of their projects. There is a question of balance here that needs to be discussed and evaluated in some way.

2. The importance of the standards as a point of reference in their plans for classroom activities came up over and over again in the remarks of the teacher leaders. The standards clearly helped them to drive a better balance between process and content, or between inquiry skills and content. They were grateful for the focus on national standards in a highly-praised October inservice and indicated a need for a coherent core of local standards for the Anchorage schools, connecting the social sciences and the English language arts in a meaningful way for each grade. There is a local curriculum, but no local standards. And for some teachers, what is considered the content of the English language arts is not clear to them. This is not surprising; it is not clear what the content of the English language arts is in the "standards" document developed by the National Council of Teachers of English and the International Reading Association.

The problem that the curriculum directors and the teacher leaders are pointing to is a significant one. There are national standards available in geography, history, and civic education (and in economics as well, as of January 1997). But they are not integrated in one document and there are too many of them altogether. On the other hand, the document produced by the NCTE/IRA contains material so totally integrated (and this is a charitable description) that it is virtually useless project halfway through its development. A locally developed document drawing on the EXCELS experience, and containing a manageable number of standards integrated chronologically and/or

thematically for each grade, could be enormously useful for future local curriculum development and assessment. It could be a valuable tool for principals to use in assessing teacher performance. Such a document would also be a useful contribution to the national scene.

3. EXCELS provided many opportunities for professional growth over its three years. One particular experience as often referred to: an outstanding October inservice that included academic speakers from the outside as well as many presentations by local educators at optional sessions. The combination of outside expertise and local talent appealed to the teachers, and I found many expressions of gratitude for the high level of academic substance offered to them in the speakers' talks and in the reading materials they were given.

The project provided an abundance of different forums for professional growth. The summer institutes seemed to have provided a rewarding experience for those who participated, and the materials handed out at the institutes, to judge from my examination of them, were of a very high caliber. The inservice courses that spun off the EXCELS program provided an on-going basis for professional development during the school year. According to the curriculum directors and the teacher leaders, EXCELS got good curriculum questions into the conversations of the participating teachers on a regular basis. Moving these conversations into their schools and to other colleagues, however, depended on many other factors: the leadership exercised by the principal, the school climate, and the receptivity of colleagues to the ideas in the EXCELS program.

The way in which the award of mini-grants was handled seemed to me to be an excellent way to encourage professional development. All schools had an opportunity to apply for a mini-grant, but only the best proposals could be chosen. Thus there was an incentive for initiative at the local school level. The mini-grants enabled a school to address its own needs in its own way, mobilized ambitious and energetic teachers in a school, and provided them with the possibility of arranging for time for getting together to get good ideas going and to talk to each other on a regular basis.

This reward for a local initiative in a school district is worthwhile continuing in the Anchorage schools. The amount of money involved is not great, but it serves many useful functions, not the least of which is the mobilization of a core of committed and professionally active teachers in the school.

My visit to the Scenic Park Elementary School suggested the value of such procedures for mini-grants. I was impressed by both the principal and the teachers involved in the mini-grant in this school. They had developed a large curriculum notebook to which they contributed their lesson plans and materials as they developed and used them. Student writing was also available to show the results of some of the lessons. The notebook could be drawn on by any teacher in the school, and evaluative comments could be added as other teachers used a lesson plan developed by a colleague for a particular grade. The principal and the teachers in this school had also decided to use faculty meeting time each week to discuss curriculum matters.

Recommendations

1.. To strengthen links between the two disciplines and the use of content standards in the elementary schools:

A. A locally developed standards document, integrating all the subdisciplines in both the English language arts and the social sciences thematically and chronologically, grade by grade. Such a document could make it clear what the content of the English language arts is (such as rhetorical elements, modes of discourse, genres, and a core of required readings drawing on the literary and civic heritage of the English-speaking world and of the U.S. in particular).

B. A careful examination of the assessment tools for the elementary school curriculum. It is not possible to say exactly what the right balance is between content and process, or between the development of knowledge and skills. Nevertheless, administrators and teachers need to engage

together in continual discussions of this topic and to think about ways to monitor and evaluate, for example, the balance between what is learned in the two disciplines through projects and what is learned through the new social science textbooks. Some teachers may rely too heavily on either, but no outsider can offer criteria for judging when either is done excessively. That must emerge from discussions among the administrators and teachers themselves.

The assessment tools could also be examined with respect to how sensitive they are to the right balance between coverage of the various aspects of our diversity and coverage of the mainframe, so to speak, of American history and literature. The comments of the teacher leaders indicated that they had had no problem integrating whatever could fit under the aegis of multiculturalism into the social science curriculum. In particular, a great deal of attention had been given to crosscultural communication concerns and to projects focusing on our diversity, such as immigration and family backgrounds. What was not clear to me was whether enough time had been given to the rest of the social science curriculum. In some cases, it seemed as if multiculturalism had overwhelmed the curriculum. A clearer delineation of what topics should be covered grade by grade, as well as those topics that might be options for the teacher at each grade level, would help considerably to address this growing problem nationwide. Such a delineation might spell out what specific topics in the textbook should be covered at each grade.

The lack of an assessment tool at each grade level tailored to the content of the curriculum might also be closely examined. National standardized tests in the social sciences, which I gather are used to some extent in the Anchorage schools, are not tailored to local school curricula. Therefore they do not provide enough information to local schools on the substantive knowledge that students have acquired through their own elementary school curriculum. A locally developed set of standards, together with a more content-rich elementary school curriculum, can provide the basis for locally developed assessments of content knowledge. They may be a necessary complement to the Jamestown assessment because it is oriented to an evaluation of the skills and strategies

students have acquired over the year rather than to the content they have studied for the year. Its format has many strengths from a motivational and curricular perspective, and it is a worthwhile mode of assessment to continue developing. One clearly should want to know what skills and strategies students have acquired from their studies in the social sciences and the language arts. But it is limited in its scope to assessing knowledge students have gained from only one history unit.

The choice of Jamestown itself, rather than the Plymouth/Boston colonies, as the focus of the assessment for grade 4 could also be examined with respect to how much it may contribute to an excessive emphasis on diversity. Study of the Plymouth/Boston colonies, if I remember correctly, constitutes the culminating unit in the new fourth grade textbook, and I believe' study of these colonies has much more significant historical and political content to offer students. They led to the rooting of Anglo-Saxon political principles on this continent, the development of a peculiarly American form of local self-government and its spread throughout much of this country, and an emphasis on the value of education for ordinary citizens, not just an elite--all central political principles and values. Perhaps an assessment unit could be developed for the Plymouth/Boston settlements like the Jamestown assessment unit, and teachers could alternate each year between them for several years and try to determine differences in the long-range value of each emphasis.

2. To facilitate further teacher growth:

A. Support over time for what teachers are trying to do in their schools. The efforts of the teachers who participated in this successful 3-year project need to be continued and maintained.

B. Inservice activities that demand substantive input from presenters and from the texts teachers are given to read. Teachers now have higher academic expectations for what is offered them. There may not be money available for a replication of the October inservice so often referred to, but the successful features of the program should be duplicated in some way.

C. Time for collaborative discussions after inservice activities. The extra half-hour added to the school day might be made available to teachers for curriculum discussions. This is something in which principals can take a leadership role.

D. Continuing assistance in how to blend process with content in classroom activities, whether or not these activities are long-term projects. The kind of modeling for the teachers offered by Mary Bristol and Barbara Bernard is one good way to provide teachers with ideas for blending process with content. Such modeling can provide further help on the use of content standards, a need mentioned by some of the teacher leaders.

Project EXCELS Evaluation of Institute

Rebeca Bowers Sipe, Ed.D.

> "At the first meeting, the facilitators made the comment several times: We are on a journey. We don't know exactly where it will take us, but it will be worth your while. I thought it sounded perhaps a little trite at the time, but in retrospect (I) find it was a gross understatement. We have learned so much from the presenters, from each other, but perhaps more importantly, from the process of inquiry which allowed us to learn from our children" (Julie Jessal, EXCELS participant).

Project EXCELS represented, for the host district, a unique learning opportunity for a large segment of the K-6 faculty. The project was unique for a number of reasons.

- It provided an integrated, content rich, sustained learning opportunity characterized by both rigor and challenge which extended over an eighteen month period of time.
- Due to its length and intensity, EXCELS required an abnormally high level of commitment from teachers for the investment of personal time and energy in professional development that extended far beyond the normal work day.
- Because EXCELS immersed teachers in both national curricular conversations through interactions with national standards in multiple disciplines and with national figures who were influential in both individual content areas and in the standards movement itself, the project required an exceptionally high level of receptivity for acquiring new knowledge, skills, and strategies.
- EXCELS required teachers to engage in ongoing classroom-based research, to examine both professional beliefs about learning, and to examine their classroom practice in light of new learnings (standards) and within the framework of their articulated beliefs. As a result, a high tolerance for dissonance and ambiguity was essential as teachers struggled to make sense of all these factors in their day-to-day classroom practice.

The project model was predicated on understandings about professional development for teachers spanning an extensive research base. Most immediately, work completed by one of the project Co-directors (Sipe, 1995) regarding learning needs of experientially open teachers highlighted the need for choice, authenticity, challenging content, ownership, and collaboration for successful learning environments. Though the EXCELS Institute built on this research base, project directors set about to study the effectiveness of a model incorporating all of these aspects with a broader spectrum of teachers. For the initial 120 participants (and ultimately 140+) involved in the

EXCELS project, no screening was completed beyond individual applications which sought to discover the individual's willingness to participate and their self-identified ability to contribute.

Qualitative Instruments and Analysis Procedures

The evaluator's role was that of a participant observer during the entire EXCELS grant project. Because of her immediacy with planning and facilitating of the project, she was able to engage participants, teacher leaders, and fellow facilitators in ongoing discussions about the project and its effectiveness.

Numerous samples of original participant writing were collected and analyzed using a constant comparison method (described by Glaser and Strauss, 1967), a method of analysis widely used in naturalistic studies. The process requires constant comparing of previous data and coding as the researcher collects new data. Codes and tentative categories emerge from the data analysis. Participant writing samples included papers submitted at the conclusion of each semester of the EXCELS institute (summary of this data to be reported elsewhere) and participant reflective responses to the institute training experience.

The current evaluation document represents a summary of data gathered from teacher responses at the conclusion of the EXCELS institute. The protocol requested participants to reflect on how they had changed as a result of institute involvement. Roughly one-half of the teacher participants responded (N=62). Three major categories emerged from the teacher responses which were relevant to the discussion of the model's effectiveness: growth in disciplinary content and standards knowledge, personal and professional growth, and transfer of new learning to classroom practice. Each of these areas will be discussed below.

Most often, elementary classroom teachers are trained as generalists in their under-graduate teacher education programs. This was true of the EXCELS teacher population. Few teacher participants

held majors in both the language arts and the social sciences. Indeed, project staff came to the EXCELS effort with strong ties to one or the other of the major disciplines included in the grant. While, on the one hand, this strength of subject area expertise was seen as an opportunity to teach one another substantive content, it was also anticipated at the grant planning stage that all participants would enter the project with some disciplinary bias. This proved to be a factor in the receptivity of participants to the various content-oriented classes provided with some participants more willing to engage in certain types of content discussions than others.

Perhaps due to the generalists nature of the teacher population, participants were clearly drawn more strongly to pedagogical, rather than content, considerations. This assertion was borne out by extensive participant comments in the reflective responses and was true of both the language arts and the social studies areas. Standards presented a new ideology for most, opening up numerous areas of concern not unlike those reflected in the popular press for the population at large. Concerns initially included local vs national control; mandatory vs voluntary use; excessive, and sometimes conflicting, content requirements; lack of consistency across the standards themselves; and child-need vs curricular requirements.

Of the writing samples summarized in this report, subcategories which emerged included awareness of new standards in the various disciplines, growth in knowledge of content and standards, and content vs inquiry. Response data including frequency of response, sample comments, and summary observations are included below.

Raised awareness

> "Looking at the standards was the first step that pushed me forward. I began with negative feelings towards placing standards on the curriculum. I saw the standards not as goals for students to reach but as a checklist for success or failure of a student. I pictured check sheets and hours of assessment to collect data on student progress. I am not a person who jumps on bandwagons, but I have truly been swayed toward the need for benchmarks for all students and teachers to reach for. I believe these standards will push everyone to higher levels of learning." KD

"I appreciate knowing about the standards. I will be able to share these and so much else in my department. It will have an on going effect with many other teachers who were not as lucky as I have been." LB

"My perspective of viewing and utilizing standards has grown immensely. I did not view standards as a priority previously. I enjoyed the exercise that we did to focus us on connecting and tying back to standards what is actually being presented and facilitated in our classrooms. In this respect I have grown most professionally ." EP

"I have reinforced my belief that American schools should set criteria and standards. We are too complacent with the democratic freedoms we take for granted. I believe the standards movement has helped me improve my own teaching by re-evaluating what I do." JH

At the onset of the EXCELS project, state and national standards were largely an unknown quantity for most participants. In contrast, reflective writings showed at least 42% of the participant population discussing the standards and their impact on the individual teacher's thinking and/or classroom teaching by the conclusion of the institute. In many cases, the EXCELS institute provided opportunity for teachers to use the standards as a sounding board for their own instructional beliefs and to explore their rationale for practices. Reflective writing revealed initial (and in a limited number of cases ongoing) confusion about the standards themselves. Of major importance was the complexity involved in meeting all the standards in a single classroom within a defined school year. Nonetheless, as illustrated in the quote above, significant growth in aware of the standards, particularly in the social sciences, was noted.

Growth in knowledge of content and standard

Over 27% of the EXCELS respondents described specific learning that resulted from interaction with the national and local speakers. Despite its highly heterogeneous population and the host site's commitment to ongoing staff development efforts, interaction with such an array of national figures was highly unique. Most participant had not attended national professional conventions making opportunities for this level of intense learning a valued opportunity. In many cases, respondents provided specific examples of new knowledge gained from speakers that was to be directly used in classroom teaching.

As noted earlier, a major goal of the EXCELS grant was to provide content knowledge for participants in order to support meaningful integration around themes. Approximately 22% of all respondents cited specific examples of such knowledge growth. In many cases, such citations described broad disciplinary considerations such as understanding of major geographic themes or being able to utilize specific primary documents or understanding better particular historical inconsistencies.

Content vs inquiry

> "I am embarrassed to admit this, but this is the first year I really took a long hard look at my social studies curriculum. The EXCELS program forced me to be aware of not only my own curriculum but other grade levels and where we are supposed to be guiding the children to. As for inquiry, I believe I have used inquiry every year I've taught. I actually believe I've used inquiry less this year than in the past because I've tied myself more to our curriculum. It's a little trickier to spark their interest with a given topic." CA

While the EXCELS institute and related activities addressed both content knowledge (skills, concepts, and values) as well as inquiry-based pedagogy, some level of confusion regarding the role of each remained with some participants seeing content and inquiry as essentially competing ideas. Working through questions about how to more fully address the requirements of local curriculum as well as local, state, and national standards, while simultaneously responding to student questions, needs, and interests, remains an ongoing challenge for these -- and countless other -- educators.

Personal and Professional Growth

A significant category of teacher responses was related to personal and professional growth. All respondents addressed this category in some manner. As early as 1975, Lorti described the intense loneliness involved in the classroom teacher's working life. Similar findings were reflected by Liebermann and Miller (1992). Comments from these participants clearly illustrated the power of a professional development model like EXCELS for supporting collegial relationships, for encouraging content and pedagogically-related conversations, and for supporting one another as

teachers who value ongoing learning. The teacher-research base for this model supported this phenomena by placing participants in long-term discussion/mentor groups which were dedicated to processing new learning, evolving questions, and working through dissonance that came when observed practice appeared to conflict with espoused beliefs. Numerous subcategories emerged in this area including personal and professional interactions, professional reading, reflection and its impact on reflective teaching, and ongoing/lifelong learning.

The importance of personal and professional interactions

> "I have never had a chance in all my teaching career to hold professional conversations with other teachers over a long time like this, and I have learned so much from others. They have bolstered my self-esteem... I have made some friends and connections professionally that may continue for the rest of my career and maybe for the rest of my life." LB
>
> "Talking and listening to other teachers, sharing ideas, trying out new thoughts on the folks who already share the history and speak the language, and so are able to jump right into discussing the idea--picking it apart...finding the golden nugget buried in the swirls of conversation...these are the rivulets and streams of consciousness that have fed the river of my professional growth over this year and together -- this growth is the might Yukon!" EP
>
> "One of the most valuable things I got from the institute was the opportunity to grow professionally and to have my opinions and ideas listened to by others of the same level and interests. The ideas, thoughts, and opinions that other adults had were beneficial in starting my own thought processes and allow a real focus in what I really believed and how my philosophy fit in with the new standards and practices." PT
>
> "Through our time and interactions, we have built up trust and respect for each other. This relationship opened up a forum for the exchange of ideas." KJ
>
> "I value the times I can talk, listen, share, and communicate with other teachers. It has been the strongest component of the EXCELS institute." JH
>
> Through conversations in small groups I was constantly validated for the things I was already doing and encouraged to try new things by people who said 'go of it and if that doesn't work, try this.'" NH

As the sample comments illustrate, the opportunity to meet with other professionals for the purpose of discussing and working through professional questions, issues, and concerns was highly valued by EXCELS participants. A full 90% of respondents addressed issues relevant to this category. Frequently, professional development models emphasize the relaying of information and

practices with an assumption that participants will make sense of the new materials on their own though this assumption has been repudiated in professional literature for sometime. Teacher comments in response to the EXCELS model, which deliberately established time and environments for such processing, contributes to our understanding of the importance of including opportunities for professional discussions and other interactions in training models.

Professional reading

> "My professional reading from the wealth of books you people (facilitators) gave me has rounded out my base knowledge, filled in some gaps, and answered some questions." RD

In this evaluation, 34% of all respondents highlighted the importance of professional readings required and encouraged by the institute to their professional and personal growth. For many teachers the time and opportunity to read widely in a field not directly related to the day-to-day pressures of teaching are extraordinarily difficult to obtain. The EXCELS institute provided teachers with a wealth of professional literature, personal copies of standards which could be highlighted and used to collect notes, and extensive bibliographies of ancillary readings. Further, discussion/mentor groups provided many occasions for discussion of new ideas. Respondent comments clearly illustrate a need for time to be provided for professional reading and discussing of new information if such information is to have maximum transfer into classroom practice.

Reflection and reflective teaching

> "...I think about more things and more about what I am doing and <u>why</u> I am doing it. 'What is the purpose?' is now an ingrained question when setting my curriculum". JS

> "During this year, I've rethought or revisited everything that I do." EP

Professional literature abounds which suggests the importance of reflection and reflective teaching. Teachers are encouraged to maintain journals, to engage in reflective writing, to constantly question why they are following the instructional practices they have chosen. However, few teachers were exposed to these reflective strategies in their teacher preparation nor have they

experienced them as practices encouraged within their work environments. Most teachers are pressed to address the requirements of the day, forcing reflection into personal time outside of school. Over 20% of respondents spoke directly of the value they placed on reflection and reflective teaching as a part of the institute. A much larger group referenced feelings of validation and increased willingness to engage in risk taking because they had arrived at a clearer sense of grounded theory about learning. For the participants in the EXCELS project, the opportunity to engage in reflection within supportive environments and with supportive colleague appeared to be one of the most valuable aspects of this professional development model.

Ongoing learning

> "I yearn to learn more about myself as a teacher and I am more game to try new things when I have the support of others with me..." JS

Repeatedly, EXCELS respondents described themselves as experiencing a re-birth in the joy of personal learning. In particular, the use of an inquiry-based model was cited as encouraging teachers to value their own questions, gather their own data, trust their own findings, and wrestle with the dissonance that may create as they translate new understandings into practice. The issue of collegiality surfaced frequently in relationship to continued professional learning. Clearly, participants were thirsty for others who were interested in learning together. This need for collaboration translated into informal study groups, Friday afternoon gatherings, book groups in home schools, and a wealth of sharing of articles, books, and other resources as individuals happened upon something that was exciting or intriguing. Respondents frequently cited a newly rediscovered joy in learning from their students as well as their colleagues. Many spoke of excitement and motivation in pursuing new topics individually. This analysis clearly highlighted the importance participants placed on lifelong learning, a phenomena many reported as being either new or re-discovered as a result of participation in the EXCELS experience.

Transfer to Classroom Practice

> "I know EXCELS has made a difference in the ways I teach and I feel they are positive changes." JN

Without question, this analysis identified transfer to classroom practice as the strongest category of teacher response. A full 100% of the respondents described classroom instructional changes directly attributable to the EXCELS experience. These changes took a number of forms including the use of a deepened content base, a change of teacher and student attitude about learning, new and varied practices including inquiry and authentic assessment, and integration or cross-disciplinary studies. Refinement of categories led to the development of two predominant categories to be discussed: inquiry-based learning and cross-disciplinary/curriculum integration.

Inquiry

> "As the Apostle Paul wrote, 'I have not already attained but I press on to the mark.' I press on to the mark of fully engaging the minds and interests of my students, of lighting an inner fire of curiosity and enthusiasm for learning and of facilitating their leanings and discoveries. I have made a start at using the inquiry method in a number of subjects but I press on to be able to use it more effectively and productively." SG

> "Inquiry has given me a new approach or strategy. It has helped me to refocus my energy on productive, meaningful and motivating projects." KJ

> "The students were thrilled to have the opportunity to help 'plan' the curriculum and therefore worked harder during the units." JS

> "Questions that have been generated by my 6th graders are very thought-provoking and sometimes the answers are not easy. I am seeing a lot of growth." J.N

> "The funny thing is that the more I teach this way (with inquiry-based teaching) the more I am dedicated to the process. The more energy I put into it, the more I am buoyed by the students' enthusiasm and the more I want to do. The energy feeds into desire to reach further and try even more. I am at times exhausted but never discouraged." JJ

Staff development research includes many studies that point to the lack of transfer of new strategies into actual classroom implementation. A major building block behind the EXCELS project was that of modeling of inquiry as a method of lifelong teacher growth and as a strategies for classroom instruction. The EXCELS experience provided participants with the equivalent of three semesters to develop and refine personal inquiry projects based on questions emerging from their own

teaching. Woven into the model were discussion/mentor groups which provided support for inquiry projects across the entire EXCELS experience. It is hypothesized that this extensive support provided the necessary resources to help teachers gain confidence in using inquiry as a tool for organizing classroom instruction.

Current *best practices* research (Zemelman, Daniels, and Hyde, 1993; Daniels and Bizar, 1998), supports the notion of active, hands-on learning that provides a place for the learner's questions, choice, and ownership. Inquiry-based instruction incorporates these features. However, this lens for viewing instruction requires a re-focusing of the manner in which many see the hierarchy of schools, necessitating a sharing of power and a movement away from set, non-negotiable curricula. Such changes were clearly problematic to some EXCELS participants. Nonetheless, of the 60 respondents for this analysis, 100% discussed changes in their classroom practice that reflected more focus on student-centered strategies, a greater emphasis on questioning strategies and student-generated questions, and a positive change in student and teacher attitude toward learning.

Cross-disciplinary studies/curriculum integration

> "I know that my integration of curriculum has vastly improved. Although I had tried some integration of curriculum before, now I understand why it works and why sometimes it didn't because now there is more understanding of the whole learning process and the practices that work best for me." EP

A continuous source of concern voiced throughout the EXCELS project was the overwhelming weight of local curriculum, state standards, and national standards on elementary school classrooms. Over 1,000 pages of standards literature poured onto the elementary classroom from the social sciences and English/language alone. A further concern focused on the lack of long-term retention of information which was presented in an isolated fashion. Potentially, it was the combined areas of concern that provide a heightened receptivity to cross-disciplinary studies and/or curriculum integration.

Referencing a concern described earlier in this report, lack of content background in some disciplinary areas created concern regarding curriculum integration. The EXCELS project strove to move integration efforts beyond a "foods, flags, and festivals" (Banks, 1994) model to a more substantive cross-disciplinary effort. It is important to note that participant growth was noted not only in willingness to try to integrate the program, but also in the development of learning theory and process which established sound criteria for integration.

Still, it is equally important to establish that, despite a lengthy professional development venture, some participants continued to see integration as competing with other, equally sound, instructional practices. For example

> "Integration has been my focus in many ways. It seems that I must find connections in the curriculum to uncover all that is required of me. Unfortunately, what I sacrifice is the freedom of writing workshop. I miss, and my students miss, their own stories. I can't come up with another option to make it fit." KJ

Clearly, movement to a new way of approaching classroom and instructional organization presents challenges that will require long-term support to work through.

EXCELS Summative Comments

The EXCELS Institute

> "I look at the world through the eyes of a learner, and I hope if nothing else, I can pass that on to my students. My whole approach to learning and living has changed because of this year long growth process." PT

> EXCELS was much deeper than a make it and take it idea share with other teachers. It has forced thoughts about our basic beliefs about education." EPA

> "I am constantly learning and questioning and researching to get a better understanding of inquiry, standards, integrated curriculum... I am growing in my knowledge." EPB

> "I believe that EXCELS has helped me to better understand how children, adults, and people in general learn." JB

> "It seems appropriate that we are at an EXCELS class on Earth Day. Earth Day is meant to acknowledge and celebrate the inter-dependence of all of the Earth. With EXCELS we have also acknowledged and celebrated our interdependence and the resulting strength of our world." KS

> "The EXCELS training, on the other hand, has been more general overall philosophy and issues--a whole other way of looking at things and this I will take with me to any grade level I teach." AC

> "It's a lot to digest! Change happens over time and I can't incorporate everything that was presented to me immediately, but it was such a powerful experience that I know it will stay with me and grow as I put my plans into action and share with others." NH

The EXCELS grant represented an enormous effort on the part of the host district. The influx of federal dollars obviously provided the opportunity to pursue training efforts at a more sophisticated level than ever before attempted in either of the two curricular areas involved. In addition, EXCELS provided the opportunity for two major curricular areas to work together for an extended period of time, forcing conversations, collaborations, and negotiations in the process. From participant comments analyzed here, it is clear that the EXCELS effort will continue to generate change into the future. Far beyond a typical staff training effort that seeks to standardize practice, EXCELS initiated intense personal change that caused many participants to alter their perceptions of themselves and their visions of teaching. The model's emphasis on collaboration and support created an environment of trust and opened the door to a willingness to take risks and examine practices and beliefs. Because participants were afforded time with outstanding national speakers and were given extensive reading materials, significant gains were made in content expertise. Similarly, because a wealth of new strategies were both demonstrated for and modeled by participants, these strategies found their way into day-to-day classroom practice.

One concern elicited from this analysis is the impossibility of providing a learning situation this rich for all teachers. Certainly, the involvement of such a cadre of national experts would have been impossible without the influx of outside funds. Nonetheless, a number of characteristics for future inservice consideration were identified through the EXCELS training that may be feasible for other, less funded, projects.

EXCELS participants

> "Each year I grow as I learn from my students, analyze each new experience, conquer new goals, and embrace new ideas. Some people are born to wallow in disequilibrium. That's me." RD

As suspected in the developmental phase of this grant, the EXCELS model appeared to work more successfully for some teachers than for others. Teachers who were open to new experiences, who enjoyed playing with ideas and ambiguity, who found change an intriguing challenge -- those individuals tended to thrive in the EXCELS environment. Unfortunately, and predictably, not all teachers felt this way.

Processing time

> "Time to process is perhaps most essential for me as an adult learner and that's not happening..." Karen?

> "I also felt a frustration of very little process time during EXCELS classes." EPC

Despite the extensive processing nature of the EXCELS institute, a limited number of participants felt that the amount of materials to be absorbed was overwhelming. Instead of seeing the change process as an ongoing one that might extend for the individual across many years, some participants felt a need for more finality and closure as the institute concluded.

Personal nature of knowing

> "Only when the material at hand directly related to my own personal experience did it have any meaning for me." JB

Some participant comments, such as the quote above, left the reviewer concerned that perhaps education has now oversold the notion that all information must be personally relevant for it to be worth learning. Such comments call into question learning for the intrigue of learning. What of pure knowledge? Theoretical knowledge? Knowledge that matters because it matters to someone else? Because the above was not an isolated comment and because it opens up many new concerns regarding the purpose for schooling, it perhaps deserves further study.

Dealing with dissonance

> "I am sensitized, polarized and I am angry about feeling I must re-invent myself as a teacher. I feel my professional 'self-esteem' has once again taken a beating. Coached in new-paradigms, better strategies, professional growth topics, and teaching practices based on new research, I'm asked to re-invent myself as if who I am isn't nearly good enough and I need to think about changing, moving, listening, and turning into someone new." PJ

> "The person I was, when I started, wasn't valued when I became a part of this institute. I was seen as someone who needed to be reinvented in order to 'fit' the puzzle." BH

The EXCELS grant encouraged extensive self-examination of beliefs and practices as well as many occasions for examining new ideas, content, strategies, and organizational patterns. For some, who "are born to wallow in disequilibrium", this proved to be an exciting model. For others, as represented by the comments above, it did not. Clearly, both PJ and BH felt the emphasis was to force them to change into a predetermined mode of thinking. Once again, this highlights the possibility that some participants are more adept at dealing with ambiguity and change than others and, hence, may respond more positively or negatively to challenging models of staff development.

Conclusion

Participants were asked to reflect on how they were different as a result of the EXCELS experience. The comments provided below are representative of those found in the respondent sample. In a sense, they provide a summary of this report as a whole. Beyond providing teachers with skills, concepts, and values relevant to the disciplines of geography, history, civics/government, and English/language arts, the EXCELS grant appears to have opened participants up to continued learning, altering personal and professional self-concepts. Such learning promises returns far into the future.

> "I am different because of all of the conversations with my fellow teachers, wrestling with how to best apply our learning to our classrooms. I am different from hearing their perspectives and exchanging ideas on what has worked and what hasn't." SG

"I've really honed my questioning strategies. I believe I'm on the path to someday becoming a master teacher. Thanks for helping me on the way." RD

"I have become much more open minded about change." KS

"Before EXCELS I was somewhat incomplete in all that I did, trying to find my way towards polishing my teaching methods and style. Now, I am a giant step closer to becoming whole with a sense of accomplishment and pride in what I did and am doing with my students" DM

This analysis points to the importance of numerous characteristics for successful professional development. Time for collaboration and conversation, each supported by a strong sense of community; opportunities for interactions with experts and quality reading materials; attention to the need to model new strategies and practices over extended time frames; assistance is identifing individual questions related to teaching and support with teacher-based research over time; choice and ownership in learning; a safe environment for thinking, recasting beliefs, and taking chances: all of these appear essential if transfer of new practices and information are to be expected.

Bibliography

Banks, James. (1994). An Introduction to Multicultural Education. Boston, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Daniels, Harvey and Bizar, Marilyn. (1998). Methods that Matter: Six Structures for Best Practice Classrooms. York, ME: Stenhouse Publishers.

Glaser, B. G. and Strauss, A. L. (1967). The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research. Chicago: Aldine.

Lieberman, A. and Miller, L. (1992). Teachers: Their World and Their Work. New York: Teachers College Press.

Lorti, D. (1975). Schoolteacher: A Sociological Study. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Sipe, R. B. (1995). Teachers as Learners: An Exploration into the Learning Worlds of Experientially Open Teachers. Unpublished dissertation, Boston University.

Zelmelman, S., Dainels, H., and Hyde, A. (1993). Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Publications.

School Principals' Perceptions of EXCELS' Benefits

School Principals' Perceptions of EXCELS' Benefits

Final Report

9/28/98

Joyce C. Honeychurch, Ph.D.

This is the final report on a series of structured interviews this evaluator conducted during the life of the EXCELS grant. I interviewed EXCELS curriculum development projects that were undertaken by faculty at their school sites. The results suggest that curriculum reform that empowers stakeholders at the school site level, especially classroom teachers, give principals a unique opportunity to assume the role of instructional leader.

Responses to the following questions contribute to the findings in this report:

- As you know it, what curriculum change did the EXCELS program accomplish in your building?
- Please describe the process of EXCELS implementation that took place here in your building?
- Have efforts been made to connect social studies and other subjects like the language arts? If so, please describe what is being done differently in the social studies. What is being done differently in the language arts?
- Have EXCELS teachers decided on any outcome markers? If so, what are they and what do they tell you about the success of the program?
- What, in your opinion, is still needed to complete the implementation of the EXCELS curriculum goals?
- If Anchorage School District had a chance to do something like EXCELS again, should the district do it? Should the district do it differently?

Principals who were administrators in EXCEL schools reported that EXCEL Projects influenced a "revamping" of the curriculum. Teachers as curriculum developers not only changed in-school curriculum content but also accomplished what one principal called, "articulation across the grades." Two schools developed schoolwide themes and one of the two published a teacher's notebook with themes that had been generated from EXCEL units written by teachers. Themes usually reflected the new social studies curriculum that had just been adopted by the district, but

themes to achieve inter-disciplinary units also were used. In one school, for example, the theme "habitat" was chosen to enhance curriculum integration since this theme allowed teachers to develop lessons across disciplines. The principal reported, "Where birds lived, as well as people, was a habitat and when we looked at birds and migration, we taught geography and mathematics, as well as language arts and social studies."

According to the majority of principals interviewed, release time for teachers resulted in interdisciplinary instruction that impacted teachers who were not originally grant inductees. Principals felt that release time had given both teachers and themselves time to work together and to be innovators. The indication was that time had made a big difference in increasing production and improving morale. One principal compared staff meetings before EXCELS to meetings once the grant was in place. With the grant's release time, materials, team approach, and staff development initiatives, this principal said, "Teachers come with questions and techniques, ready for feedback and sharing."

In addition to the innovations of theme-based curriculum and interdisciplinary units, other innovations reported were the development of a two-way (Spanish-English) immersion program, social studies lessons using web-based resources, cross age lessons and units, and multicultural and multiethnic celebrations in kindergarten, first, and second grades. One respondent pointed to community involvement as an EXCELS legacy. Increased writing in the social studies was also mentioned, as was the incorporation of drama and poetry in social studies instruction. One school invited an author of children's literature Patricia Polaco, who offered a narrative about, "Don't tease; don't bully." Another class constructed postcards to advertise the beauty and geographic treasures of Alaska.

Implementation of curriculum seemed to be the foremost area for which school principals saw themselves having the greatest role. Neither the in-service training that preceded curriculum

development, nor team efforts at writing lessons and units were on principals' list of accomplishments. Implementation was seen as needing an overseer and principals rose to that challenge. In one school the principal asked teachers, "How do we coordinate our efforts so not to hit and miss?" He then pushed a process that included curriculum development that spanned from the sixth grade, through the seventh grade, providing articulation with the nearby middle school. Grade level meetings, only possible because of release time, created opportunities for curriculum articulation, not only at the grade level, but also across grades and disciplines within the school. This, plus successful bridging of elementary school curriculum with middle school curriculum, demonstrates true curriculum articulation that the EXCELS grant made possible.

Next to principals' perceptions of themselves as being in charge of curriculum implementation, the most frequent response concerning their role in EXCELS was the role of evaluator--or as a facilitator of evaluation. A number of respondents described their vigilance in monitoring the effects of the new curriculum initiative on learning. The following comment demonstrates this perception of their evaluator role:

> "Once teachers make plans, they need a conversation with me (the principal). Markers will be a part of (our) working together after the faculty works together. (We must) look at test results and ask, 'What do we need for kids to know; then compare to see if what we are doing is working.' "

When principals did not intervene as evaluators, they still wanted to know what was going on--especially when EXCELS projects spilled over into the community. As one principal replied when asked about markers and evaluation, "The feedback I do have is a written report whenever teachers go out into the community."

When principals were asked to make recommendations for the improvement of EXCELS or innovations like it, school principals demonstrated their savvy in organizational and staff matters. One defined "vision" as a necessary school site kickoff strategy for a large project like EXCELS. He said, "We need to talk about where we have been and where we want to go." Another pointed out that even with release time buy outs, teachers needed more time to develop expertise on

teaming. Another saw dangers in her faculty's growing in unison: "Before these teacher took the (EXCELS) classes, they already were the risk-takers, shakers, and movers. Now (we have) a divided staff; those who grow and those who won't." Finally, the communication between central office staff and school site administrators was scrutinized. As one vocal principal put it:

> "What we need is better communication from central office...The building principal and teachers can make it happen, but we really don't have the bigger picture." In some cases, principals blamed their own busy schedules for any discontent they might have about the grant. As one principal noted, "I would like to see the EXCELS grant continue and expand. I need to attend the meetings."

The feeling of being overwhelmed by the challenges of EXCELS was put into context by a few of the respondents who said that too much was going in their schools. One called this "an overdose of new curriculum." Another principal pointed out that too much curriculum innovation had arrived--one separate from others. He said, "The question is how do we get integrated and involve all curricular levels." Another seemed to many balls in the air to juggle." The consensus was, however, that if the innovation could take on a life of its own then EXCELS would, indeed, have been worthwhile. This was voiced by one principal who asked, "Now what? I'm looking for buy-in of my teacher!"

The interviews serve to reinforce the notion that curriculum change, like other changes in public schools, is difficult but rewarding. For school principals EXCELS offered a unique opportunity to interact with their teaching staffs and play an instructional role. Whether or not the content innovations of EXCELS will be institutionalized, certainly the many new human connections will have a lasting effect on many. From the point of view of a school principal, this makes all the difference! Most principals accepted their position wanting to help youngsters learn better. EXCELS opened the door for just such an opportunity. Principals were able to join with their teachers to improve classroom teaching and learning.

The EXCELS Project: A Research Report

Interviews conducted with 19 classroom teachers

Submitted to the Anchorage School District

Anne E. Kruse, Ph.D.

August 25, 1997

Introduction

The EXCELS Project involved elementary teachers from a variety of schools. The main focus was in the areas of Language Arts and Social Studies. The main purpose of the project was to improve teaching strategies through the disciplines of Social Studies and Language Arts. The project was implemented over a three-year period beginning in the fall of 1994 and was concluded in the spring of 1997. This report represents interviews of a cross-section of the teachers who were involved in the project over the last three years.

Initial meetings were held in April 1997 between Anchorage School District (ASD) personnel who had been involved with the EXCELS grant and various contracted researchers. Previous to the initial meetings, the ASD had determined that face-to-face interviews would provide the most useful information for project evaluation. The focus of these initial meetings was to clarify the qualitative research design. Discussions centered on gathering data that would represent a cross-section of sites and teachers since it was quite evident that not all teachers, teacher-leaders, and principals could be interviewed. A framework of questions was developed by the research group with instructions to submit the refined questions to the project coordinators prior to the actual interviews. The final list of interview questions appears in Appendix G.

Research Design

For the purpose of gathering data for the teacher interviews, it was determined that face-to-face interviews would yield the highest quality of responses. The human-as-instrument research design

that is associated with qualitative research allows participants an opportunity to share and discuss their professional growth, or lack thereof, in the project. A list of nine questions (see Appendix G) was developed. These questions centered around the teacher's participation in the project specifically related to Language Arts and Social Studies, how the discussion of standards related to the project, the teacher's own personal and professional growth, the degree of professional extension beyond EXCELS, and an overall evaluation of the EXCELS project.

The project coordinators at ASD determined that data should be gathered from two sources: elementary schools involved in the EXCELS project that applied for and received a mini-grant; and, from those elementary schools that did not receive a mini- grant. Mini-grants applications were offered to elementary schools for the purpose of implementing a specific project relating to EXCELS. A maximum grant of $2000 per school was allowed for the 1996-97 academic year.

A list of eight schools and participating teachers was provided to the researcher by the ASD. Four schools received mini-grants and four schools did not receive mini-grants. From that list, the researcher selected two schools in each category and then contacted one of the teachers in each school to assist in coordinating the interviews. Interviews were scheduled during the day at each school. ASD provided a substitute teacher during the scheduled interview days for each elementary school. This allowed the researcher the opportunity to complete the interviews efficiently.

The list of nine questions was faxed to each teacher who assisted in coordinating the interviews. Providing the questions ahead of time allowed for a more thoughtful and meaningful response to the questions. Participants were encouraged to prepare for the interview by reviewing the questions and gather appropriate and selected examples of student work specifically related to the EXCELS project and bring it to the interview. Each interviewee was audio taped and confidentiality was assured. Interviews were scheduled for 45 minutes. Some interviews lasted slightly longer and some slightly less than 45 minutes.

Description of Sites

Four elementary sites were selected which represented a cross-section of diversity among the elementary schools. Criteria for school selection included three areas: socio-economic, geographic distribution, and schools that received the mini-grants and those that did not receive mini-grants. ASD approved the four elementary sites as a representation of diversity among the EXCEL participants throughout the three-year period. Additionally, all schools were approximately the same size in student population.

Description of Participants

A total of 19 teachers consented to a face-to-face interview. Only 17 teachers were audio taped. One participant became extremely nervous just prior to the audio-taping so it was decided by the researcher not to audio-tape the responses but rather to script-tape them. However, that particular participant provided a wide range of student examples that proved extremely beneficial. The other participant who was not audio taped requested to present materials via computer and video- tape. The teacher proceeded to answer the questions using this technology. In addition to this means, the researcher also script-taped this interview. A total of seventeen audio taped interviews were submitted for transcription.

Interviews were conducted with elementary teachers who were teaching in Kindergarten through Grade 6 either in a self-contained classroom or in a team-teaching situation, plus one teacher in Title 1/ K-S. The following chart represents the grade levels and number of teachers interviewed at that grade level.

Teacher grade level distribution

Kindergarten	I teacher interviewed
Grade 1	0 teachers interviewed
Grade 2	4 teachers interviewed
Grade 3	2 teachers interviewed
Grade 3-4	1 teacher interviewed
Grade 4	2 teachers interviewed
Grade 4-5	1 teacher interviewed
Grade 5	3 teachers interviewed
Grade 6	4 teachers interviewed
Title II K-S	1 teachers interviewed

19 teachers interviewed total

The teaching experience ranged from four years to 22 years. Three teachers were in their fourth year of teaching which means they were in their second year of teaching when they signed up for EXCELS. The following chart represents the number of years teaching by school:

Number of Years Teaching

School	Teacher #1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6
School A	7	6	9	22		
School B	4	7	8	20	9	4
School C	18	6	14	4		
School D	20	21	18	22	14	

There were no first-year teachers in this group of EXCELS teachers. Three teachers had taught four years, seven teachers had taught from six to nine years, and nine teachers had taught from 13 to 22 years. The mean number of years teaching for this group was 13.3 years.

Most of the participants had begun during the initial year of the EXCELS project. Five of the participants had joined during the second year, and two teachers joined during the third year. The five teachers who joined the project during the second year stated they did so because of the

generous graduate credit that was offered through the grant. The other two teachers who joined during the third year did so because of the excitement and enthusiasm from other participants.

Findings

The findings have been divided into two parts. The first section is the emerging themes with accompanying appropriate participant excerpts that are reflective of the qualitative analysis of the participant responses. The second section provides direct teacher excerpts from actual transcripts with the corresponding questions that listed in **Appendix A**.

Overview. The kindergarten and second grade teachers who were interviewed stated they had more difficulty implementing the writing ideas which were shared and practiced during the EXCELS training. They believed the strategies and activities could be better utilized at the intermediate grade levels. The kindergarten and second grade level teachers, five of them, also found it difficult to find appropriate writing examples which demonstrated student work from strategies the teachers had learned throughout the EXCELS training. The researcher found it easier to interview the teachers in the intermediate grades because they had more experience with the writing components of the training. The teachers at the primary level shared it was more difficult to implement some of the writing activities due to the lack of skill development of the students. However, the intermediate level teachers found the activities that were shared during the training to be appropriate for the intermediate grades. Those teachers stated the activities were more easily implemented due to the advanced writing skills possessed by students in the intermediate level grades. The primary teachers were not void in implementing the activities. However, they simply stated that they were not able to utilize as many of the activities although the ideas were exciting and worthy.

Generally, the teachers appreciated all the materials that were given to them. All of the participants stated they received more materials than they had an opportunity to review and implement. They

stated they would need additional time to sort through the materials and consider which ones would best fit into their lesson plans.

Most of the teachers were excited about the changes that were occurring in their teaching styles but they were also quick to point out that the type of teaching which they were learning in the EXCELS project involved more work for them, not less, at least initially. They stated that after a few years of teaching, one could become familiar with the different curricular areas and then one could "stock-pile" one's resources. The first few years of setting up this type of teaching/learning situation could be much more difficult due to the inquiry project focus, attempting to guide students to different resources whether they are primary sources or people.

> This type of teaching is more time-consuming. You also have to think very long-term. You just can't throw kids into an inquiry project the way they used to throw kids into the water and let them sink or swim. You have to build a whole background before they go into an inquiry project.
>
> I haven't gone through all those materials they gave use. I've skimmed through most of them but I haven't gone through all of them. I mean they gave us tons of books. It's all great stuff, but there is always so much going on.
>
> I have this wonderful library from EXCELS and every time I look at them I find something new. I look at them every couple of weeks. I guess that's how I have begun to implement the standards in my classroom.
>
> One of the participants made some closing remarks that were indicative of many other participants:
>
> I'm just very honored to have been a part of this group. It was awesome.

Classroom and building climate. It was apparent to the researcher there was a significant difference between the mini-grant schools and the non mini-grant schools. There was a shared commonality, a level of enthusiasm and participation that existed at the mini-grant schools. The two schools who received the mini-grants made strong efforts to get all teachers in their respective buildings involved. The teachers in the non mini-grant schools appeared to be cloistered together and did not have a strong desire to share ideas with the remaining staff It was not that the teachers in the non mini-grant schools lacked for effort. They attempted to share during in-services and staff meetings but they readily pointed out that there was not the interest to pursue additional sharing.

Hence, the reason for cloistering together with the other EXCELS participants in their respective buildings. Commitment to the project. It would be an understatement to say that the teachers in the EXCELS project were not committed to the goals of the project. They attended sessions on long weekends, late weeknight evenings, and summer workshops. They implemented activities, ideas, and materials from their training sessions. They were eager to share what they had learned with their colleagues. They stated they were treated as professionals rather than students which made their commitment to the project easier. They were not "talked down to" as one participant referred.

> It was hard sometimes to do those weekend things because we had to do Friday night and all day Saturday. But you just made a commitment to do those things.

It was quite clear that each of the participants were dedicated to complete the training and transferring that information to their individual classrooms. Each of the participants was overwhelmed at the amount of information they received during the time in which they participated. They were excited and enthusiastic about the ideas, the presenters, and the activities. The teachers felt encouraged and supported by ASD to pursue these new ideas.

Ideas extended to other teachers. Most all of the teachers were willing to share their new ideas and information with their colleagues, even though there was not a mini-grant received in all of the schools.

> I see now that there are three of us in the building that are a pretty good resource if people need it. I think it is easier for people, if they have a question, because we are right here in the building, to come to use if they need help. We can hopefully give them ideas.

> We each did presentations in the staff meetings to teach the staff what we're learning and to present the different materials and everything. I did a drama. I just got up and was really excited about this purse I had just got at an auction which was Eleanor Roosevelt's. I shared about all of the items in the purse and all the teachers thought it was real.

Mini-grant versus non-mini-grant schools. It was readily apparent to the researcher that there were differences between the mini-grant and the non-mini-grant schools. There was a stronger commitment to share from the mini-grant schools - to share their ideas, to set school-wide goals set forth in the grant proposal, and to carry them through to the end. He non-mini-grant schools appeared to be more isolated in their ideas, rather keeping the discussions and information

within those who participated in the EXCELS project. The following excerpts reveal comments from the mini-grant school participants:

> If you think of something you can just bounce off of the rest of the teachers in the building and they don't have the same training, maybe they have a totally different perspective on it. And we weren't all in this building when we went through the classes.
>
> I wouldn't have received information filtered down to me if it wasn't for the mini-grant. It would have just been another document that I flipped over but the mini-grant allowed time, and forced you to do it, and to be treated as a professional. You're allowed to do the research on your own and grow personally.
>
> It allowed me to focus on things that I would loved to have attempted but didn't have the time to do. It's really important in this profession.
>
> The mini-grant provided me an opportunity to prepare and actually pick parts to help our students like small group activities, connecting field trips.
>
> Part of our mini-grant was to give us time to meet with those teachers who were the core EXCELS teachers. We even had the counselor, the special ed teacher, the librarian. We looked at citizenship goals.

One of the mini-grant schools discussed their school-wide effort in the area of standards. These teachers stated that the mini-grant offered them an opportunity to discuss the Alaska standards specifically as it related to their teaching and to their school as in the following excerpt:

> We discussed national standards in the EXCELS grant and then in our mini-grant we also looked at the state [standards]. We looked at both of them and pulled out ones that we felt would fit into our multi-cultural goal.
>
> The mini-grant has really pulled the school together. The vision was already there, the multi-cultural goal was already there. We just said "How can we better go about it". And, plus it gave us the chance and the time to meet as smaller groups.
>
> I really feel that what it did professionally within this building I haven't seen happen here. In other words, we were able to get together and meet, and it has done more to bind us professionally than anything that I've ever seen before.
>
> One of the more positive outcomes of the mini-grant was bringing the level of awareness of standards to all of the staff If we didn't have the time from mini-grant, it would have never happened.

Quality of the EXCELS training. There was no doubt in these teachers' minds about the quality of the training. Each participant articulated clearly the appreciation for the selection of speakers, the materials and resources given to them, and the work sessions that brought them together professionally. All but one participant stated they would definitely recommend this

training to the entire teaching staff and hoped that someday all teachers would have an opportunity to participate, at some level, in a similar project.

> I think [ASD] had a really good balance of everything. They had guest speakers come in, they had us all meet together, they had us meet in little groups, so I think everything was pretty balanced.
>
> I still have so much stuff that they've given me that I want to read.
>
> We had such a broad range of presenters, it was really a treat. We didn't all enjoy every one of them, but it was a wonderful experience. It will probably never be repeated in my career, especially in Anchorage. But the quality of people they brought up was outstanding.
>
> We needed to remember to be inspired by the speakers and not intimidated by them.
>
> I appreciated the personal growth at the education level of a graduate student. I don't want to hear someone talk down to me as if I'm a student, but to elevate me. And I really appreciated that
>
> A lot of the ideas that I use came from Kathy Short when she really talked about the use of literature units and literature sets and the text sets.
>
> The personal museum was an idea in EXCELS from Kathy Short that she had done and then with Father Alexis telling us different things. We had to do that in EXCELS and then tell everybody what we had done. And that's one thing that I try to tell my kids that I'm not going to ask you to do something that I haven't experienced.
>
> Some people found Kathy Schwartz's presentation real threatening. They weren't comfortable with their own past history to share. One person in our group rebelled and did not want to share.

Question #1: How has our participation in EXCELS changed what you do when you are teaching?

Most of the teachers who were interviewed stated there were significant changes from the way they taught prior to EXCELS to the way they were currently teaching as stated in the following excerpts:

> One main thing . . . was the focus on people and heroes and history. That changed everything for me in social studies, science, and reading
>
> It has introduced me to some new books to use with the students and new ways to take them out of bounds and really give them a sense of self and a sense of movement of place.
>
> I look more at the broad picture of where I'm going but without already having a destination in mind once I get there.

The timing of it changed. Because I was offered enrichment and time out of my classroom to make an observation.. so it forced me to look at what is real important in language arts.

. . . geographic themes

Basically, it's real hard to delineate now between language arts and social studies.

I'm much more aware of the standards. They're always in the back of your mind.

I hated social studies in high school and in college and I think it was because of the way it was presented to me. Now it's one of my favorite subjects, I absolutely love it.

There are a lot of us out there who were taught with textbooks, answer questions. So I think that one of the main things with EXCELS is that you need to do a personal tie-in.

Probably the single most powerful change .. . is a greater focus on inquiry and its use in the classroom.

I am much more reflective on my teaching. I've learned to ask better questions first so that I know where the children are and then find out what they already know. I have been able to go more and more in-depth into how other cultures see the world.

The main change is simply becoming more of an observer, not facilitator, watching what the kids are doing so that I can guide them in the inquiries, giving them more choices, especially in Language Arts.

I used to do a lot of themes . . . but now I think the concept of standards. I ask myself "what are the students going to learn in terms of the standards when I've finished". Looking at standards, knowing standards, getting involved with standards has really changed the way I focus on what it is the students are studying.

However, there was only one teacher who stated there had been no changes in her teaching.

. . . because I am such a new teacher, it hasn't changed anything. It has just reinforced the ideas I was lucky enough to learn from a couple instructors at the university. None of the ideas were new to me. Some of the ideas may have been threatening to some of the other people. I look more at the broad picture of where I'm going, but without already having a destination in mind once I get there.

Question #2: How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Language Arts?

There was a wide range of expectations from teachers relating to Language Arts as stated in the following excerpts:

to really have a voice. . . and it has to make sense . . . details, details, details

I try to give them the freedom to show me what they know because they always know much more than what I had in the past assumed they did. And that I did not have to be the provider of everything.

Specifically, using the stack-using things that I already have available rather than purchasing a kit.

Forcing me to look at their [students] writing differently - to look at the way I teach language arts, guiding them step-by-step.

Journaling, sharing one letter per week and sharing it with the rest of the group

My expectations are that I want students to find something that they want to find out more about. Most of the time we keep dishing out information and students never really get to investigate things that they're interested in.

The `Museum of Self' activity. The kids actually got to reflect on their own lives and their sense of place in the world and what things are important to them.

The biggest thing I asked them to do, which wasn't a part of my teaching before, was to make connections between their own lives and the content. Whatever they were learning but to make connections. It's been powerful for both them and for me.

I expect my students to be able to scan and select literature unlike they were able to do before. Hopefully, they now have a discriminatory process that they didn't have before to help them find what they might want to read.

I think I have tried to get at a higher level of conclusions when students read. I was impressed with Paul Gagnon and his sense of a need to equity across all socioeconomic levels.

Question #3: How has our participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Social Studies?

As listed in Language Arts Question #2 above, participants stated a variety of expectations for their students ranging from geography themes to problem-solving to content discussions. More specifically, teachers stated the following:

We focus a lot more on geography now and we have daily geography questions we do. I changed my focus from having the kids memorize all kinds of things on maps to learning how to use the map.

We made the image of the United States map on the playground. I found a stencil, at a garage sale. It is a giant playground map, 3 feet x 36 feet. Then we did a school-wide thing where we put geography questions out and as a class they needed to report an answer that day. Students got an award as points added up.

I am more aware, like of the standards and making sure that I try to cover all the areas of social studies; really looking at geography and the regions and why it is important to know those five themes.

> Mostly it freed me up to say "OK, that's a personal reaction" instead of just it has. to be a social studies reaction. And that it's more of a living being that is reacting to a situation. And the student's are conscious about the concept of old living diaries in their journal. So, that I was allowed to free up myself
>
> Students are really into a lot of problem solving
>
> It has allowed me to connect other things that were personally interesting to me.
>
> Studying different parts of the American History, geography, and such. Teaching social studies with no text. Constructing a civics component but using references. The textbook became supplemental, not the primary source.
>
> I expected more of my students.
>
> I always felt that I had to go in sequence and I found that you could jump around and talk about major events as long as you tie them together. Before I always felt that would confuse the kids to jump around, and now EXCELS has helped me to realize that I don't need to worry about that.
>
> The number one answer would be the kids making more choices themselves and along with that that they're able to feel more responsible to gather the information and to pursue the information.
>
> They are learning social studies by a different method. They are constructing what they want to learn based on choices that interest them. I think they are more involved when their peers are presenting to them, when you jigsaw back and forth.

However, not all the responses were as positive as those listed above. One teacher stated that she believed that she has not changed her teaching strategies nor her expectations of students in social studies during the Excels project, as stated below.

> It hasn't changed much. Social studies is hard.. I use social studies as a way to learn outlining, note-taking, presentation of information, that kind of thing.
>
> I ask for more inquiry what they would like to know about things. EXCELS gave me the focus to look for those things.
>
> I think in terms of geography and of the habits of he mind of history. I didn't do that before. EXCELS is very connected to constuctivism.

Question #4: How has the discussion of standards in the EXCELS project changed your teaching?

Participants were the least comfortable discussing this area. The comments ranged from "I don't remember talking about them" to "I compared what I do to the national standards and I think I'm on target". One teacher stated that it was the "grayest area for me" because she stated that she was a

very concrete, sequential person. Apparently, some teachers were either absent during the discussion of standards or they were not interested in the discussion since most of them could not recall a clear discussion of the standards. There were a few teachers who could relate to the standards and found the discussions enlightening.

> I didn't really even think about standards before. They're pretty long and involved but once you focus on one area, it becomes magical. And you see, "Oh I'm doing that".
>
> They gave us a bunch of lists... about 13 standards to put up and I just haven't focused on those in the class though.
>
> That's a weak area for me so it was kind of challenging to have to look at those. Yet, when I examined my teaching I find that it does meet those standards. I think it is still real good to have them before you and it's kind of a way of honoring the next teacher that I have stuck to these standards and kids are prepared. It's a good checklist for me.
>
> It has really made me examine what I expect of kids. However, in our building, there has been a real hesitancy to talk about the standards. It's just one more thing to incorporate... to find out that you are not reaching the standard, for whatever reason, is professionally threatening. That's hard to hear.
>
> We had one EXCELS-wide release day. Instead of going from the standard and how you reach it, we just threw out all our lesson plans and looked at what we'd done and wrote it all up. Then we said this fits those standards and that first that tone. That was one of our better class times.
>
> I think just making me aware of thinking about how can I break it down so it's kid-friendly but also not looking at them and thinking, how my word, I have to really teach to every one of those. We did this activity where we looked at the standards and looked at what we were already doing and how many already we are doing. Yes, I am addressing them. So that made me feel better that there are these standards but I am addressing them in a variety of ways.
>
> It's nice to be able to say it's there and I need to do it.
>
> You know what you are trying to achieve where before you just kind of do this stuff This way it gave it a focus and a perspective so it was a direction to head towards.
>
> Two ways; one, it has broadened and deepened my focus in terms of the content and two, it has become more child-centered.

One participant tried very hard to construct analogy but after a few moments was able to describe how the discussion of standards related to her teaching:

> I started out having to "build a hat" as the analogy was for us in the program. Mine was a garden. So maybe the standards are like the sun. It's the thing that tells us where we're headed. It keeps us reaching and gives is our guiding light. Without it,

I don't think we can go anywhere. I think it is probably the most important part of everything that we've learned.

Question #5: Please describe your own personal and professional growth as a result of being involved in the EXCELS project.

The most common theme of the personal and professional growth was collaboration. Participants were appreciative of the fact that time was afforded to them during the day and valued for the project to discuss ideas, activities, concerns, and resources with other colleagues. Most of the teachers stated they appreciated receiving materials and resources from the grant. They specifically appreciated the books, the activities, and the required reading. Most of the teachers had not yet read all the materials given to them but were making it a goal to read them in preparation for the next academic year. Some teachers, however, stated:

> It has encouraged me to be more open for students going in their own avenues, in their own area of interest. It has encouraged me to give them more choice. It seems to be real empowering for the students.
>
> It's made me have new interest in challenging me to read. I have taken a lot of [staff development] classes this semester . . . like Revolutionary War and Civil War, and the Constitution.
>
> You take a lot more forks in the road now. It's kind of risky for the teacher because you are treading in uncharted waters. That's where my limited six years of teaching is good . . . I'm not really locked into anything.
>
> I think it influenced me being more willing to take on writing grants this year.
>
> Networking.. just being forced to work with other people and get to know them . . . to realize all they teachers have to offer . . . and be willing to give and take.
>
> It reinforced how much is out there. It's overwhelming. It does help me figure out what I need, maybe not what I want, but what I need to explore to make my classroom more academically well rounded.
>
> I think for me, being a teacher-leader was such an honor. I really came to know my partner because we had not had previous experience together. We just formed a real bond.
>
> Working with other people, not just from your building, but being able to hear what other people were saying and doing . . .
>
> It gave me an opportunity to put things in priorities; to have guidelines and how to do that.
>
> Writing my own units. I got all excited that I wrote my own unit.

Time to be able to share. We don't get enough time.

What really helped me is becoming more widely read and trying to find the literature to connect.

I'd really like to become a storyteller. I've been encouraged to become a writer about Alaska native heroes. So now I'm encouraged to think ahead to someday

Writing stories because I see how powerful children's literature was as linked to social studies.

Getting much closer to the literature in constructivism and inquiry - ideas that I knew on a surface level but never really knew anything about.

Having an opportunity to constantly re-visit with other teachers about these ideas, to interact with them really kept you from just dropping it.

Question #6: What aspects of Excels supported you the most in your growth? The least?

Overwhelmingly, the teachers stated that the discussion that they had with other teachers within and across grade levels were the most beneficial. These participants stated they grew the most professionally and personally when they were able to discuss ideas with their colleagues. Being treated as a professional was extremely important to this group. It appears that the EXCELS grant provided the context in which these teachers did not feel like students but rather felt like professionals with a common goal. Some of the comments are reflected below:

. . . having the small groups, sharing the different ideas that we were integrating into our classrooms . . . just getting together and being prompted

. . . the walking tour of Anchorage was really good.

the people, the common bond of the people. The October EXCELS social studies in-service. I think that opened a lot of people's eyes in our district that, oh, we do have some good people and we can go to these people They are good resources for us.

The choices, letting people make choices about how they spend their day was real powerful. If you can teach that to kids, that you have a choice of how you are going to spend your time, generally, they want to spend it in the most productive way. The kids want to be at school and we really need to hook into that and keep them going.

EXCELS helped to open up professional conversations and I think that's real important.

There was one exceptional speaker, Dennis Dedenburg and the whole group that came with him. It made social studies come alive.

We worked together as teachers in our workshops. Jigsawing was one thing...

Having professional writers come in and critique your paper. I haven't had to write a paper in so long. Then we kept reflecting on the paper and we had writing groups.

It was the encouragement that you can leap out there and do some of this stuff. It's almost like putting a rubber stamp on what you're doing.

The presenters that came like Paul Gagnon and Michael Alexa. Another aspect would be the small group discussions. I liked the discussion of Vygotsky.

Question #7: What if anything have you done beyond the district-provided EXCELS training that you might not have done without your exposure to EXCELS?

Most of the participants stated they have not done anything or very little in the way of additional training beyond EXCELS.

I haven't done anything. (five responses)

I did a state writing consortium and I did the academy last summer. I'd like to do some book talks this summer with some of Kathy Schwartz's books.

It revamped what we are doing. Basically, changing some of the attitudes of why we're doing what we're doing.

Just the mini-grant to assist us in observing other classrooms. That was great.

I haven't had time to get into anything more. I do want to get ahold of the Joyce Hinkum books.

I've done the most in terms of reading in the content and in my quest to find the literature that connects

I have a lot of books on pedagogy and I have been relating be learning to a new curriculum for teaching a new grade this year

Various books on pedagogy.

Question #8: On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest. how would you rank your growth from your initial involvement with the EXCELS Project until now?

Overall, this question does not merit inclusion with the final report. This question was extremely subjective in nature and participant's answers are reflective of the type of question. Some of the participants tried to qualify their responses as follows:

I'd say 10 because my comfort level with dealing with people has really come up.

We worked together as teachers in our workshops. Jigsawing was one thing...

Having professional writers come in and critique your paper. I haven't had to write a paper in so long. Then we kept reflecting on the paper and we had writing groups.

It was the encouragement that you can leap out there and do some of this stuff. It's almost like putting a rubber stamp on what you're doing.

The presenters that came like Paul Gagnon and Michael Alexa. Another aspect would be the small group discussions. I liked the discussion of Vygotsky.

Question #7: What if anything have you done beyond the district-provided EXCELS training that you might not have done without your exposure to EXCELS?

Most of the participants stated they have not done anything or very little in the way of additional training beyond EXCELS.

I haven't done anything. (five responses)

I did a state writing consortium and I did the academy last summer. I'd like to do some book talks this summer with some of Kathy Schwartz's books.

It revamped what we are doing. Basically, changing some of the attitudes of why we're doing what we're doing.

Just the mini-grant to assist us in observing other classrooms. That was great.

I haven't had time to get into anything more. I do want to get ahold of the Joyce Hinkum books.

I've done the most in terms of reading in the content and in my quest to find the literature that connects

I have a lot of books on pedagogy and I have been relating be learning to a new curriculum for teaching a new grade this year

Various books on pedagogy.

Question #8: On a scale of 1 to 10 with 10 being the highest, how would you rank your growth from your initial involvement with the EXCELS Project until now?

Overall, this question does not merit inclusion with the final report. This question was extremely subjective in nature and participant's answers are reflective of the type of question. Some of the participants tried to qualify their responses as follows:

I'd say 10 because my comfort level with dealing with people has really come up.

My initial involvement was probably a 2 but my skill levels is probably a 5 because I see a lot more growth in myself

I probably went in like at a 5 and I probably would say that I'm at a 7 because there is a lot more growing I'm going to do, even next year.

Probably a 10. We've done a lot of things.

Initially, I did not have a clue what it was. For myself it's been a 10. I'm the type of person who needs refreshment.

I'd say I'm an 8. I think I've still got a long ways to go but I feel that I've come a long ways.

I would put it between 9 and 10. It has really done so much to increase my level of awareness, my sensitivity. It's made me a better teacher.

Probably a 5 or 6.

I'd say a 7. I'm an independent learner so it could have been a 10 but I would have done a lot of things alone and it's just so much more fund to do it with your colleagues. The sharing is placed within the framework of rich content so you're not just sharing, you're sharing about important things.

I guess I'll put myself at a 6 because I know that I have really gained a lot from EXCELS but I also feel like I still have a ways to go.

Question #9: Do you think that it was worthwhile for the Anchorage School District to undertake a Project like EXCELS? Why or why not?

No other question elicited such a strong response as this last question. All participants responded eagerly and positively and proceeded to quickly support and explained their answers. Most of these teachers stated strongly that they wished more of their colleagues could have participated in this project. They also stated that future projects should be as inclusive as possible. This group of teachers stated that the ASD should definitely consider undertaking another project such as the EXCELS Project because of the personal and professional growth and its attention to assisting children to become excited about learning. Participants stated the following:

It was one of the most beneficial in-services that I had been to because it was real practical and it was mainly led by teachers. Most of us appreciated the sessions taught by he teachers than the guest speakers.

Definitely. Even when you went Friday, all day Saturday, or a Thursday night after teaching all day and people would go home energized.

After teaching all day long and sit for four hours and listen to a national speaker and still be energized and couldn't wait to get back the next night-that says a lot.

Definitely. I wish everyone could undertake something like this.

Somewhat. I guess I expected a syllabus and then an outline of all the work that was going to be involved and all of the components and how they were supposed to help me as a teacher. I wish I could have seen the end.

I don't know. I do think ASD should pursue other strategies of teaching. Maybe we should get better at what we're teaching before they decide to change it again.

Absolutely. I know the 130 teachers all felt that way by the end of this. They felt like they had been on the leading edge and learned something and made a difference in their teaching.

Absolutely. It was so enriching. We had support teacher training, bringing up people from the outside to give you new ideas or confirm ideas you already were using, it was so great. And we haven't had opportunity to do this.

Definitely, because of the friendships that were built.

Definitely. It has given tremendous opportunity for growth.

Definitely. The strongest component was it lasted over three years, not just a summer institute. You need a long-term commitment from the providers as well as the participants.

I thought it was the most valuable district teacher training program that I've ever seen, quantitatively, because it didn't just happen and then disappear. The leaders were involved right on through and we got to know them as people and they got to know us. Even though we were a large group it was still a very close-knit group. The quality of the whole thing was superb.

Absolutely. The biggest drawback was that it was limited to so few people. I mean it touched a lot of people but it could have involved more in the project.

EXCELS Teacher Interviews Report

Janice M. Schnorr, Ph.D.
University of Alaska Anchorage

September 8, 1997

The EXCELS grant was a three year project designed to move nearly 1,100 elementary teachers towards implementation of the national standards in geography, history, civics/government and the state and national English Language Arts standards using a strong inquiry focus. Teachers were recruited from every elementary school in the Anchorage School District (ASD). Approximately 120 elementary teachers participated beginning in May, 1995. They participated in a ten credit graduate level block of coursework designed to familiarize them with the national standards, teaching/learning strategies, and inquiry processes. The final institute session was held on April 22, 1996.

The EXCELS grant incorporated numerous evaluation measures. This document summaries only one evaluation measure, the teacher interviews. Two other researchers interviewed school principals and project facilitators at other schools. In addition, a district-wide 4 page survey was distributed just prior to my interviews. The survey contained questions that were similar to my interview; however, the questions incorporated primarily a multiple choice format that included detailed lists of concepts, information, and strategies related to the project. Individuals interested in these evaluation components of the grant should contact the Anchorage School District for addition information regarding the project.

Participants

Only teachers who had participated in one or more of the courses were eligible for inclusion in this study. Teachers were recommended for inclusion by ASD stakeholders. Recommendations were based on active participation in the project In addition, some schools were specifically selected to ensure data collection from school sites where school principals or project facilitators were not interviewed by other researchers mentioned previously. I personally contacted all teachers and requested them to participate in the project. Since all contacts were made during the first three weeks of May, several teachers declined so additional teachers were included. Nineteen teachers were interviewed from 15 different schools. Three interviews were group interviews which included two or three teachers from the same school. Teacher(s) selected the appointment time that best fit their personal schedules. Some interviews were conducted prior to classes in the morning, some were held during planning sessions, and some were conducted after classes. All interviews were taped with a small audio cassette tape recorder.

Research Instrument

The research instrument consisted of a 10 item questionnaire that was administered by me. I developed the questions based on thoughtful reflection of project goals. During planning meetings with other project stakeholders, the questions were modified several times in order to capture similar project data from several sources. The questions are listed in Table I. A copy of the questionnaire was forwarded to teachers prior to the interviews. Several teachers, however, did not review the questionnaire prior to the interview.

Table I

Interview Questions

1. How do you use inquiry learning in your classroom?

2. How do you accommodate different learning styles or abilities in your classroom?

3. How do you develop an appreciation for different cultural and linguistic groups?

4. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you do when you are teaching? Please give me two or three specific examples in Language Arts and Social Studies of things that you now do which you did not do prior to your EXCELS participation.

5. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Language Arts? Please give me two or three specific examples of things your students now do which they did not do prior to EXCELS.

6. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Social Studies? Please give me two or three specific examples of things your students now do which they did not do prior to EXCELS.

7 In your opinion, what percent of your students successfully demonstrated mastery of your student outcomes?

8. How do you think your students performed on the recent achievement tests (below grade level, near grade level, above grade level)?

9. Describe any student outcomes or specific scoring matrices that you have developed related to language arts and social studies.

10. Describe the integration of language arts and social studies at die school level.

Data Analysis

Interviews were transcribed by a professional word processor prior to my analysis. The software program NUD•IST, Version 3.0.5 for Apple, was used to code the data. Coding categories for the data emerged from teachers' responses. The categories that emerged were not exhaustive and mutually exclusive categories. They were salient, grounded categories of meaning mentioned by participants. Many categories contained terms and concepts that had been discussed previously in various workshops and meetings throughout the three year inservice project.

Results

Since this questionnaire involved ten questions, each question is stated below along with a narrative of the results. Some quantitative data is usually included along with examples of teachers' responses.

Question #1 How do you use inquiry learning in your classroom?

All nineteen teachers indicated that they used inquiry learning in their classrooms. The inquiry strategies used varied considerably. Some teachers mentioned numerous examples of strategies and gave brief descriptions of them; others merely mentioned one or two strategies. Table 2 summarizes some of their specific responses.

Table 2

Inquiry Strategies Used in the Classroom

Strategy Examples	Number of Teachers
Student Centered Activities	18
Braining Storming Quick Writes Listening to Student Conversations I-Search Lessons Student's Own Questions Inquiring Minds	
Research Projects	9
Tradition Research Projects Internet Research Interviewing Writing Letters Using Primary Documents Sharing Projects with Others	
Student Seeking Answers	9
Not Merely Giving Answers	
Continuing Questions	2
Reading Non-fiction	

The categories listed above reflect terminology mentioned by teachers. Student centered activities focused on the theme that students were more directly involved in choosing some parts of the curriculum. Brainstorming was used to introduce lessons to determine what students knew about specific topics; and questions regarding what they wanted to know about the topic were generated and students selected topics from the list. Interest surveys and quick writes were also used to gather information about students' interests. Teachers said the following:

> Well, I introduce a topic depending upon what the curriculum is and then the children have opportunities to come up with their own questions, in their writing or sometimes we do it orally with the kindergartners.

> Well, what I've been doing over the last year is trying to find ways to tap into the student interest level and when we're studying a certain topic, I spend time up front talking about what we're going to be studying about and trying to, through quick writes and interest surveys and listening to conversations that they're having, trying to figure out what might be something that they could latch onto in that unit that would provide them an avenue for going through the skills that I want them to have that they are more or less choosing their topics. I've been teaching for 22 years and I've seen a lot of kids go through and if you gave them a list of prioritize your favorite subjects, social studies often came out near the bottom because for kids history is yesterday and they cannot see any relevance oftentimes to what happened 50 to 100 years ago. But I do think with this approach it's more starting with what they know and building on what they have interests in and making social studies more doing social studies instead of just hearing about it. I do see more children saying that they like social studies and I think that's always an indicator that you're doing something right.
>
> Probably the biggest focus is something that I call inquiring minds. It is where we start out with questions and sometimes it's teacher directed, sometimes it's student directed and it ends up in a huge research, individual research projects with students sharing information and at the end we have a museum where the students have a visual report and a written report that they share with adults, classmates, parents and it's a come in and see museum and check things out. One of the nice things about inquiring minds is that the kids are given choice and so when you ask them to . . . you give them a theme or topic and tell them they can pick anything in it, you really get to know what the kids are interested in.
>
> What kind of questions do you have and where can you find the answers? And so then we just kind of dispense, do our reading, maybe reading for content and then the kids would come back and be so excited to share the things that they had learned.
>
> We'll be more comfortable saying I don't know, what do you think? Where can you find that information and who can you go to? Instead of always being the authority so that they take more ownership in what their learning.
>
> I've changed my role from kind of being the dispenser of knowledge to trying to help the kids discover things for themselves. And also trying to maybe discover more about what their thinking is, how they are thinking through. So, I'm trying to get away from yes and no answers that things are right or wrong and try to help them to make connections and see where they're going with their thinking.

Teachers mentioned terminology and strategies presented through project inservice activities. Some teachers appear to implement numerous strategies while others limit their strategies. Actually, some teachers may limit their strategies because they have not had sufficient time to develop curriculum units that utilize the strategies. This will be addressed later in this paper. Other teachers may have an incomplete understanding of inquiry, they seem to limit it to student centered activities and projects whereas the broader definition presented by Kathy Short included other components

including continuing questions and the life long learning process. All teachers appeared to be enthusiastic about inquiry learning and they implemented it with a variety of strategies.

Question #2. How do you accommodate different learning styles or abilities in your classroom?

Numerous classrooms and schools throughout ASD have students who come from culturally diverse backgrounds. In addition, all schools have students who qualify for special education and remedial reading programs. During the initial EXCEL workshop, several presenters discussed issues and strategies related to working with students from culturally diverse backgrounds and students with different learning styles and abilities. Many of these accommodations were mentioned by teachers. Table 3 summarizes some of the strategies with examples.

Teachers mentioned a variety of strategies that they used to assist students who demonstrated diverse learning styles and abilities. Teachers said the following:

> I expect that they do the same things but I might quietly or privately go over and say, you know you only have to do two sentences where the rest of the kids might have to do five. Or if we're writing a paragraph, you need to give me three pieces of information and they have to give seven.
>
> And with that we try to provide lots of choices for the same activity so there are, you know, a number of ways that they can fulfill that expectation.
>
> We do offer a variety of ways to respond to literature. That is primarily how I accommodate. There is drama, dance, puppets, plays, written responses of different kinds, artistic responses, reciting poetry, write a poem. The way that children can respond to literature is . . . I think we have . . . a menu you know of many, many kinds of ways that they can respond.
>
> Kids sometimes dictate . . . I change my expectations. I modify assignments. Sometimes I shorten assignments.

Table 3

Learning Style Accommodations

Strategy Examples	Number of Teachers
Adjusting Assignments	10
Few Problems or Sentences Choice of How to Complete Assignment Oral or Written Assignments Written or Typed Reports	
Tutoring	8
Peer Tutors Cross Age Tutor Cooperative Learning	
Computer Use	7
Not Merely Giving Answers	
Other Adaptations	19
Reading Non-fiction	

You can modify your expectations for the children as far as written reports or typed reports.

One thing that we've both done is have peer partners within the classroom as well as our big buddy partners from another grade level. I have 5th graders that I use for it. Last year we used 6th. I think I prefer the 5th graders. I think they're more willing to actually work with the child. I think the 6th graders have their mind elsewhere. They're just more interested in other things.

We do.. a lot of peer tutoring and cross age grouping, cooperative learning.

Well a lot of times since I don't have any help in the classroom, what I try to do is I have students help each other. We do some cooperative learning, informal as well as some more formalized cooperative learning. A lots of times I'll have the kids teach each other. Lot of that is their own business, their maturation, but it's a lot of work because I call in parents and make sure they're reading at home, having them read here with me using to tutors, whatever it takes.

We're also very much into technology at our school so we've been able to carry some of those ideas into allowing technology to be for some children that's their choice for how to study something. They want to find it on the Internet, they want to make a HyperStudio project about it. Surprising enough though, they don't all jump to that either. I mean it's.. their choice. Some of them would rather do something more, you know, artistic like a play and I think we've got to have that balance. The technology though has been another option.

We use computers versus if they have hand writing struggles .. or spelling struggles then we use the computer.

I try to teach at all different learning modes - not just auditory or visually but kinesthetically even in the areas of reading, not just in the math with manipulatives.

So we try to teach through all of those modalities of learning so that we strengthen the weaker areas and still hit those strong areas for the students.

For example, I do reading workshops and writing workshops so kids are.. able to work at their own particular levels.

I have little stories on tape for the kids who are just emerging...emergent readers.

I try to gear everything so that we are reaching those kinesthetic learners which is where a lot of the project activity comes in. A lot of them can build things, work with their hands, move, ah . . . where writing may be especially difficult for them, but they can build a project and explain.

I actually had one of my special ed kids in writing... because the fine motor skill of writing period is very difficult for him . We had altered.. some note taking skills, so he went from taking notes on papers to notecards instead.

Tutoring was the most frequently mentioned strategy. Several types of tutoring were used including peer tutoring, one-on-one tutoring, cross age tutoring and cooperative learning groups. Personally, I was amazed that more teachers did not mention tutors or cooperative learning groups in response to this question or other questions posed during the interview. I thought that some of these strategies had been discussed during the initial inservice workshops. In addition, I have been in numerous classrooms throughout the district and I have seen teachers employing these strategies very effectively. I also know that some teachers have heard or read about the strategies but they have never implemented them in their classrooms for a variety of reasons. Usually, the most mentioned reason is a lack of time to plan the unit.

Some teachers also adjusted assignments by reducing the work requirements or allowing students to choose how they wanted to complete the assignments using oral or written formats, etc. I personally expected more teachers to mention these adaptations because both were discussed in the inservice workshop. Fewer than half of the teachers mentioned computers or technology devises. Some schools have focused on technology and have allocated money to support the purchase of equipment. During the past year, numerous schools were wired for the Internet so technology may be an option in the future provided teachers have the knowledge and skills required to teach it to students.

Teachers also employed other adaptations including special reading and writing workshops and activity centers. Several teachers mentioned hands on activities as well as different ways of presenting information to students. Rather than just giving verbal information to students, several teachers mentioned the use of visual aides as well as audio tapes. These represent standard adaptations within many special education classrooms. Again, I expected teachers to mention these adaptations. However, these adaptations are difficult to implement in classrooms especially when class sizes exceed 20 students.

Question #3. How do you develop an appreciation for different cultural and linguistic groups?

Appreciation for different cultural and linguistic groups was a major strand of the initial inservice workshop. Numerous classrooms and schools throughout ASD have students (approximately 21%) who come from a variety of cultural and linguistic groups. Numerous elementary schools contain 50 to 95% percent enrollments of students from different cultural and linguistic groups. The strategies varied considerably. Table 4 presents an analysis of the various responses.

Table 4

Cultural and Linguistic Appreciation Strategies

Strategy Examples	Number of Teachers
Cultural Knowledge	16
Foods Festivals Arts Language	
Alaska Native Focus	8
Family Histories	7
Parents & School Connections	8
Bilingual Personnel	2
Multiple Perspectives	2

Some teachers indicated that the entire school culture was designed around the premise of appreciation for all cultural and linguistic groups so they did not implement anything special. They noted that they sponsored special cultural celebrations focused on foods, festivals and art projects. Teachers said the following:

> We had a great multicultural week here. We've got some wonderful multicultural teachers and we brought in different people from different cultures. We did cooking. We did dancing. We did arts and crafts. We actually went on a multicultural field trip at the Performing Arts Center and they got to see Korean dancers . . . you know, any type of thing that we can do just to expose them to different things, cause I don't think that a lot of times kids see those things. And, to actually see live performances or to actually make the cooking, do the dance and those types of things makes it really meal for them too.
>
> The kids talk about the different holidays.
>
> What I do at the beginning of the year, we did actually school wide is we had a cultural heritage fair. Okay, what are some things they still do that has to do with the culture of their time. You know, if they came from Ireland, what are some of the Irish customs that they still use today. What are some of the Irish foods they eat? What it is that makes them Irish? Okay, if they happen to be Philippine, you

know, what is it that they still use? We had examples and dressup days and the kids really did a good job.

Later in the fall we do a unit that addresses customs that we developed from the individual child and branch it out to family history and what kinds of rituals, routines, customs are important to that family and invite family members and invite them to send in whether it's clothing items or food items or, you know activities that they might do to share with us. Anyone that's interested in participating is more than welcome to and others that aren't, that's just as well and we try to expose the kids to the variety in our classroom as well as other varieties. We use the book Molly's Pilgrim that I'm sure many people use to get the literature connection and then branch off from there. Then we also get into the concept of immigrants and why people come and try to honor the fact that many of them are here for different reasons and then extend into the customs and traditions that they use through their holidays. Since it branches around Thanksgiving we use the American ones as part of our own education, but then we also include anything they're willing to share with us and expose them to what we know of cultures as we know them.

Right now I'm working with a . . . one of the bilingual tutors in helping my kids learn some Yupik because that's one of the native groups up here and because a lot of times when they hear a language that they've never heard their first inclination is to laugh because it sounds funny. So we talk about how to be respectful of those things in ways. and we have a little boy that just came in from Indonesia so he's really blossomed in his English but the kids, you know, had to understand.

We read lots of stories from different cultures and I have about 8 to 10 Alaska Natives in this classroom so we've had experts come in, and we've learned a couple words. This school is very diverse so Cinco De Mayo, lots of native programs and things like that. Lots of celebrations.

Again, through a lot of the literature and history. We are always connecting concepts. I use more.. I think more of... maybe a global concept idea in teaching so that we see connections in everything. I do not like especially a month which particularly focuses on black history or women's history because I don't like isolating any particular group. Urn, I do do a lot of literature, a lot of poetry, a lot of connectiveness with history and bring in people . . . different cultures all over. But we can't really study the history of a particular country without looking at cultures within that country and I think that's especially true of the United States where there are so many different cultures represented. So we're always connecting with literature and history. Truly integrated.

I think it happens pretty naturally because.. ..we have the diversity and then we have our social studies and.... and so it's like through reading, through spending time with the people, having speakers come in. We had a Tlinget storyteller just recently.

Cultural celebrations were discussed during the initial inservice workshops and teachers were encouraged to include numerous other strategies rather than limiting it to occasional celebrations. This was evident in some responses. The curriculum focused on Alaska and Alaska Natives at several different grade levels. Parents were invited into classrooms to share their knowledge of

native art, festivals, folklore and language. Students were encouraged to talk to their parents to determine their roots and bow or why they arrived in Anchorage. One teacher was an AlaskaNative bilingual individual who modeled numerous strategies. Numerous teachers had students who were not proficient in English. They relied upon bilingual personnel to translate academic concepts to students.

Only one teacher talked specifically about including that student's culture within the classroom. Two teachers also addressed multiple perspectives, a topic that was included in the initial inservice workshop. I believe that teachers are developing and implementing some strategies for enhancing cultural and linguistic appreciation. In addition, several schools have made a concerted effort to invite parents to participate in the educational programs of their children during the past several years. I believe that additional leadership at the school level may be beneficial.

Question #4. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you do when you are teaching?

Teachers eagerly discussed changes they made as a result of participating in the EXCELS program. A summary of their changes appears in Table 5.

Table 5

Teaching Changes

Concepts/Activities Examples	Number of Teachers
Integrated Subjects	16
Different Teaching Techniques	10
Foster Inquiry	8
Habits of the Mind	2
Active Student Engagement	2
Making Connections	4
Emphasis on Geography	3
Teaming for Planning	1

Although only 16 out of 19 teachers indicated that they integrate subjects as a result of their participation in EXCELS, hased on their interviews I believe that all 19 teachers indeed integrate subjects. Some teachers integrated subjects prior to participation in the project. Most teachers changed their teaching techniques Rather than limiting their curriculum to textbook information, they expanded the curriculum and attempted to develop connections for students by starting with the knowledge base that students possessed and expanding it based on student questions. Teachers also modeled the skills more and allowed students to practice the skills more in a variety of settings. Inquiry was mentioned as a favorite teaching technique also. Some of the teachers statements are listed below.

> We're in the social studies area more. We do more with social studies and branch out from that than just setting it as a separate assignment because I kind of pool it together and take reading from that. I take writing from that, and history from that and so I get more instead of just having, okay, it's reading block, spelling block, it's history block, it's geography block, its map and globe skills kind of thing. So when it's all bunched together then I think they can see the. where it connects in the world instead of just a separate block over here by itself.

The literature makes social studies for a 10 year old very manageable. They can through fiction and kind of tame non-fiction, tackle some bigger issues. We, for example, in fifth grade study the civil war and that whole concept of prejudice and on division and conflict, they're big concepts and if you can get a good literature book into their hands so they're reading about a character and can gauge on that level, then they're often able to come to a discussion with a better understanding than if they just have to tackle that big issue all at once. Also, with the school day being as crowded as it is, there's just not enough time any more to divide every subject out even if I wanted to, which I don't. There's a time factor there and I think you would definitely have to slight one subject or another so what I do with social studies is it's my big organizer and almost all of the literature that we. use ties into something. It either ties into social studies or science or health. But social studies is just a natural. Those two just go hand in hand quite easily.

I mean I think everybody I know tries to integrate but you kind of get just lost in having to do too much and this EXCELS really helped me focus on that language arts and social studies are a natural team. That by using the textbooks as a springboard and then staying away from them for a while and lening them go to trade books and the InterNet and all the different resources, I'm really finding that the kids are getting much more depth in both their language art skills and their knowledge of history and social studies and where their place is in those two things.

When we integrate the curriculum it makes it easier for a lot of the kids who are at different levels that can catch on. In this booklet we're talking about somebody from a Navajo Indian tribe. Well the Navajo Indians lived in this area. This is kind of broader than what I expected, but they were able to find the United States on a map and then be able to locate the area in which the Navajo Indians lived and frequented. And I try to put social studies into everything. When we're talking about the setting of the story we talk about the setting and when is it taking place. So we try to get a historical background as well. So when they're making their pictures and they're doing their summaries, one thing we always do is we write a setting of the story. That way they can have an idea of the character and the place.

Before EXCELS I would have been more concerned about covering, for example, the third grade curriculum on the state, and I would have heen sure that we did every page in that book. Now I look at it, how many ways can we experience the curriculum.

I really find myself asking myself how does what I'm doing fit with the standards. And in social studies I look especially at the habits of the mind because that was something that was new to me and it's fun for me to just look at it. I haven't had teachers yet ready to take this on. Other than just an introduction to it.

What I do try to relate to now are the habits of the mind which are always focused... well they're always on my board so they're always a focal point. I want students to develop those habits of the mind in their learning, in their thinking so that they are able to draw this interconnectiveness throughout what they learn. And that they see the relevance of what they learn.

This time I asked them what kind of activity they wanted to do - book report, character sketch, a book report cover, creating a crossword puzzle about the book, writing a letter to the author, that's exciting.

I was talking about that project we did in the two third grades where the kids made the dolls. We were researching ethnicity and we took the five themes of geography and went through and all the cultures and then all the live themes and we had a matrix. And the kids as they were learning about the cultures filled in the matrix according to the five themes. That would have never come. That would have never happened if there hadn't been EXCELS.

I now am . . . mapping . . . when we're reading a story I try to have them literally draw the map of where it happened. .I didn't take the time to do that before so I'm really taking more time to develop the geography and history related to stories. We make more group decisions. I think we work toward a consensus. Sometimes the students realize different points of view and learning to compromise and that's not always easy.

Question #5. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Language Arts?

The most frequently mentioned expectation related to students assuming more responsibility for their own learning. This expectation was introduced during the initial inservice workshop. Some teachers are also requiring students to demonstrate their new knowledge and skills by writing about their learning experiences in journals and books. Table 6 summarizes some of the changes in expectations that teachers attributed to the project.

Table 6

Language Arts Expectations

Types of Expectation	Number of Teachers
Self Learning Responsibility	9
Integrate Literature	5
Demonstrate New Knowledge	3
Write Books & Journals	3
Research Reports	2

Some comments that teachers made regarding changes in their expectations related to language art are listed below.

> I guess as I've learned to let go, they've learned to become empowered and so they've learned to take the literature and relate it and I see much more aha's in literature now from the students.
>
> You know they don't need to come to me and say Miss R... you know I don't know how to take notes here or they're just extremely self guided.
>
> The beginning of the year students established goals, learning goals . . . they could be academic, they could be social. At the end of the quarter they reflect on those goals.
>
> . . . so some of my expectations are more of them being able to show and express what they have acquired in learning and it's been hard for me because usually I want them all to come out with the same things ..and it's not always that way.
>
> So I've kind of changed the way that I structure reports. Now we did have some written reports and you can see them on the board on the wall, but in fact a smaller version of that went into their Alaska scrapbook. But some of the reports can be just like a little bubble. A drawing and then a few sentences about it, so I guess I'm trying to,.. have them do more report writing in different ways and more along their abilities and their actual level.
>
> Research reports, independently chosen with approval and research reports are a real hub of what I do now. Before we tried to do one or two a year. Now we do do four every year and I vary the different techniques we use in note taking in presenting the report and that kind of thing so Ihat they get a wide variety of ways of doing things and then right now their on their last inquiring minds report and they were given free rein.
>
> And I think I'm probably expecting some higher level thinking of them but they wrote letters in the first person. They had to be a colored person in 1920 and to write a letter from the perspective of that person.
>
> We write sentences every day. We learn about the parts of a sentence...If you go down to my classroom, my kids all with the exception of 2 and that's because I just got them, can write a complete paragraph. And they can tell you what the topic sentence is and they'll tell you which are the supporting sentences.
>
> They have daily journals that they use for any aspect.
>
> Or with the writing projects. with the large book projects that we do that include some extensions. That's a product that we want them to think of very specially as a gift to their parents, but also a gift to their future that they're going to be proud to show this to their own boys and girls when they're little and to think about that as their history, that this is something they are taking from now into the future.

Question #6. How has your Participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Social Studies?

The most frequently mentioned expectation related to students knowing more about geography and specifically being able to read maps. This expectation was introduced during one of the inservice workshops conducted by the Salters. Some teachers also required students to complete more research reports with the expectation that students had to locate and use some specific artifacts. Teachers also expected students to be more aware of issues related to social studies. What constitutes heroes? Who are heroes today versus heroes in history? Table 7 summarizes some of the changes in expectations that teachers attributed to the project.

Table 7

Social Studies Expectations

Types of Expectation	Number of Teachers
Geography Knowledge	6
Use of Artifacts	6
Research Reports	4
Awareness of Issues	4
Write Journals & Develop Scrapbooks	3

Teachers relayed rich descriptions of social studies expectations. At times, however, their responses included curriculum changes that they implemented as a result of the project rather than expectations. Some sample descriptions are included below.

> I focus more on geography we do map and globe. I don't just do map and globe. We study it but then we go farther with our community and awareness of the world and the United States too.

> They can use letters as primary documents to answer their questions.

I decided that they needed some more hands on activiUcs doing more along the lines of artifacts. And so the kids had done their reports on the various culture groups and then we tried to find artifacts from those areas. We did like the Aleut armor and Athabaskan quivers and birch bark baskets and, you know, some canoes for the Southeastern groups.

And the second trip (to the museum) they were able to concentrate more on the artifacts.

At the beginning of the year the newspaper was too difficult for many of them to read.

. . . we did explorer research reports. . .

It's the (social studies curriculum) very workbook, worksheet intensive and so what I have done with that is try to make it more activity intensive so that if kids are working with a map, they're doing more than just filling in the worksheet...lots more activities.

I guess my expectations are that the students are managing more of their own time than they might have before. And this. is part of the empowerment concept.

One example is at the very beginning of the year we took our social studies text out and they had I think 20 minutes to find all the names they could from the social studies book and then we put them up on butcher paper all the different names they found. I mean they ranged from Thomas Edison to Janis Joplin is in there, you know and I mean and the kids. We put them up on the board and they got to pick anyone they wanted to do research on and that they found a little bit in the social studies book but most of them went off then and found chapter books or trade books on the people and then they ended up making a huge timeline connecting all these people who overlapped with whom and they ended up getting into small groups to share of the people that were alive at the same time. And so they really are getting a much bener sense of history in the making and history being ongoing and where their place is and where everybody else's place is. In the past I've done units that tie the 60s and the 90s and the kids always made those mistakes that well the 60s with the Civil Rights Movement was when the slaves were freed. And I fought that for 3 years and finally once we started doing this where the kids were making the connections, where they were building timelines, where they are connecting it to people from person to person. A person seeing this chain of people they could see the large difference in time between the 1960s and the Civil War and what happened there. So they're getting a much firmer sense of time.

I think part of it too is that a lot of it I base on rubrics. I think that that kind of has been real important like even with the maps. I mean they knew exactly what was expected.

People that are heroes, people that are important in history but how we can track that to modern day times and what those relationships are and what makes that person important, how is their addition recognized and what ways are we going to recognize that. And again, like Karen was saying, it's hard to measure that, but I think we're happy to say that they are more aware because we're more aware and because of the things that we were exposed to through EXCELS.

My expectations for my kids are just to be aware of what they're doing. Aware of what this is. This is social studies. Social studies can be fun. It's the people you talk about and read about and dream about. It's the places you've heard about. You know if they want to go to Hawaii well there's a lot of history about Hawaii. There's a lot of history where we live right here. There's the heroes.

Question #7. In your opinion, what percent of your students successfully demonstrated mastery of your student outcomes?

Fourteen out of 19 teachers stated a percent figure. The figures varied considerably. Table 8 summarizes the information.

Table 8

Percent of Students Who Successfully Demonstrated Outcome Mastery

Percent	Number of Teachers
100	3
90	3
80	2
75	2
70	1
60	1
50	3

N=14
No percent figure stated by 5 teachers

Numerous comments regarding mastery were made. Some teachers readily answered with a percent figure; others indicated that they were unable to do so for a variety of reasons including the fact that they did not administer tests but relied on observation and students' journals or projects to

make judgements about their learning. Some comments related to mastery of student outcomes appear below.

> I'd say 100% because I do adjust them to individual needs.
>
> I think a very large percentage. I would say in the students this year probably somewhere between 75% and 90% have, we would say average or above on everything that they do.
>
> I'd say probably about 80%. There are some people in any program or any population have some issues that are interfering with their academics and I think there are in my class like all classes across the nation, I have a portion of my students that no matter what you do, they're going to have trouble because they're coming to school with some issues that are bigger than anything that I can do here. So I would say with whatever criteria I establish, I usually feel good if I get between 80 and 90%.
>
> In my mind I'm breaking it down to social studies and language arts. And I would say if you're looking at the social studies probably 90 some odd percent. If you're looking at language arts - in reading the outcomes that I had projected for my students, I feel like they did pretty well with - a high percentage. With writing I don't feel the same way. We didn't get as far with the writing as I had intended so I would say . . . probably 60%.
>
> Probably no more than 50%. It's these kids and I've followed them all the way up. These kids are real low.
>
> Okay - most of the time at the end of different lessons, I have them do a hands on type of activity write or something so that they are creating and showing me what they've actually learned in the classroom. I'm not.. in to giving a lot of tests. I like to do a lot of observation and I like them to tell me a lot of things so we do a lot of journaling, we do a lot of writing and they write to me about what they've learned.
>
> I guess I look at each child from where they are and how far they've come and I feel like they've all. ..in the social studies area have a great sense of family, self, sense of place. In language arts. .I guess it's just hard for me to say what complete mastery of something. I've been pleased with the outcomes of all the students even those that haven't moved far because I know that there's a reason...whether they're bilingual or they have a learning disability.
>
> Well I think the hardest part for me was to get to the stage where I could give a kid who wasn't absolutely perfect in reading or writing a response that validated his ability in conversation and that it meant something to both the child and the parent.

Question #8. How do you think your students performed on the recent achievement tests (below grade level. near grade level. above grade level)?

This question was difficult to answer for some teachers again. Four teachers predicted that student scores would be below grade level, five predicted that students scores would be near grade level

and only one predicted that her students would perform above grade level in science, social studies and math. Four teachers indicated that no testing was completed in their classrooms or schools and six teachers did not respond directly to the question. Instead, they discussed some reasons why students' scores were low. Some of their comments are list below.

> It's not applicable because we don't do any of that. We have no testing. Not in our building anyway. I don't know if other first grades do, but we have no testing at all.
>
> I would say they were at grade level.
>
> We had below and that's why we're a Title school. These tests don't seem to reflect the cultural differences. We have such a diverse cultural base here at D . . . and the standardized tests don't address that . . . they're not the best means by which to test our children.
>
> My guess is that in spelling they're going to be very low. They're going to be below. My guess is that in science and social studies they're going to be above average. My guess is in writing I'm going to have everything from very, you know, below because some of them still have that. they are not at a point with their particular disability where writing is a strength for them, but I'm going to have those who really take in a lot and are able to write it. So I'm going to have a long range in the writing but I think spelling is going to be very low. I think math is going to be fairly high. I think math will be high for a lot them. Social studies and science will be higher – above average.
>
> Oh, I'm sure that they were probably below grade level. These kids are still at beginning third grade. They were very, very low second grade when they came in to me.
>
> I think I could say though that of all of them, if you tracked a pretest and a post test from the beginning of the year have made at least their year's growth.

Question #9. Describe any student outcomes or specific scoring matrices that you have developed related to language arts and social studies.

Eleven teachers stated that they used scoring matrices for some assignments or projects. Three teachers noted that they used the rubrics developed by Title I. Only three teachers specifically stated that they developed and used their own scoring matrices. Three teachers stated that they used verbal questioning strategies with students rather than written rubrics and two teachers gave feedback to students by writing on small sticky notes which students kept in their writing journals. Some of the teachers comments are listed below.

> We did a rubric for the explorer reports.

We may keep stickies on a page that correct a spelling or a usage that they didn't do correctly and that sticky can either stay on that page or go to the back and become the private dictionary.

In the writing we do a rubric we've designed.

We do a lot of student questioning, a lot of teacher made materials and very little standardizing.

For the transportation book I had a rubric and it was at the back of the book and they checked off whether they had done that particular activity and the brochure was a part of that rubric.

And we do have with the writing evaluation process where different points are given to students on the way they write and it goes all the way from the mechanics to style of writing. So there is a format that we do use for that. I use that because it does give me a kind of a clear point of . . . I mean 5 points, 4 points for this, you know so I can see where the students are and..but . . . pay a lot of attention to content and style. I want to be sure (1) that the students have a grasp of a concept that they can express their opinion on different topics; (2) I encourage descriptive writing, use of literary devices, so I took a lot at style of writing and content more so than the mechanics.

The Title I rubrics.

We did a rubric for the maps and globe.

We talk about what aspects of it are going to be graded, what's important. Often times they're privy to the rubrics right up front. Sometimes they fill it out themselves. Parents frequently have input into it so we'll have a three tiered evaluation.

We religiously use the analytic rubric for grading the reports. At times I've adjusted the rubric so that besides the 6 writing traits, they also have the requirements of the written paper having a cover sheet, having a bibliography, citing resources, putting into your own words. (See example #2 in Appendix H)

I requested copies of scoring matrices that individuals used. Four teachers gave me copies of some of their matrices. One teacher gave me a copy of the San Diego State College - Quick Assessment for reading, a screening devise that is similar to the Dolch Basic Sight Word list, along with a developmental writing assessment rubric that he has used for several years. Three teachers gave me copies of evaluation instruments. Copies of these are attached to this report as Appendix H. The first example titled "Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel" reflects a short checklist that students can use as part of their self evaluation. The second and third sets of examples contains grading

rubrics that are more fully defined. Numerous items are listed and a "Likert" scale scoring system is integrated into some items.

Question #10. Describe the integration of language arts and social studies at the school level.

The integration of language arts and social studies at the school level varied considerably from school to school. Teachers from two schools indicated that both subjects were well integrated. All other teachers indicated that they were uncertain (six schools) about the integration or that the integration varied considerably (7 schools). Numerous comments regarding the status of the integration were shared with me and some are listed below.

> I don't know. I mean I know that people. ..the majority of the teachers here are integrating,.. things .. across the curriculum as much as they can.
>
> I would hate to really say because I've not been in the other classrooms.
>
> I don't know a lot about primary, but I'd say third.
>
> When you're saying at the school level, I'll be very honest, I'm not sure what's happening in the Japanese emersion program.
>
> We have a new principal, we have new staff members here. Five new ones out of 20 and then a new principal. So... we're just getting it together this year.
>
> Some are still struggling with it so I think if we used a scale of zero to 10, with 10 being high, I think we have teachers all the way from say the 2 level who are just beginning and can't quite make those jumps yet, to teachers who are at l0+ where . . . everything is connected. [At the 4th, 5th, 6th grade level] I would probably say about 33%.
>
> When you take the standards from the EXCELS that we've learned the EXCELS standards for social studies, standards for language arts, and then we plug them into what we're already doing, it's like...it's kind of nice to see that a lot of us have been doing that already, pretty much as a school. Of course that is a reflection on our principal also. Because that's what she's expecting.
>
> There were a number of our teachers involved with EXCELS and I think everybody has in their own area at their own grade level used it beautifully. They've really worked hard to make sure that the kids are actively involved in integrating all concepts together so that they don't separate reading and writing as just being letters and sounds. As a staff we don't really do it unified. We're all in our own little levels and so I can't really speak a lot for everybody.
>
> But I think that it's just beginning and I hope that it doesn't end here because whatwe've done is really valuable and I hope that as we struggle to find out how to use the standards in the classroom as we look at how we're going to be evaluated as teachers. I think it's real intimidating. It can be very scary and I hope that the people who were involved have a

chance to learn more but to also help one anothera nd other teachers as we go through this process.

Conclusions

Throughout the course of the project, I participated in numerous activities and interacted with teachers. My overall perception of the project is that teachers thoroughly enjoyed the inservice format and felt that it was the most valuable professional experience in their careers. Several teachers also expressed concern during the interviews that they were learning so much new information through the EXCELS project and other special programs that they were unable to implement all changes simultaneously. They simply did not have enough time in the school day to teach and totally revise the curriculum. Some of their comments appear below.

> I mean a binder this thick of things to do (inservice workshop manual) and like it said, it takes a while after a class like that to... to absorb those things and say where can I fit this in and you can't do it all at one time You can't do it in every subject. Reality is you just have to take pieces of it and put it in a little bit at a time. And so that's what I'm . . . I'm absorbing it and now I'm about ready to start . . . and I have done some of those right away...you know things that I could come back and do right way, but I'm still working on it.

> And the principal was not supportive at all.. It was really frustrating for us.We'll have a new principal next year.

Teachers also expressed concerns regarding evaluation measures used with students. Some schools have transient populations so teachers do not really have an opportunity to teach them skills over a long period of time. In addition, many students have limited skills so their performance on standardized tests negative impacts the class and school average. Some comments regarding these issues appear below.

> Well, this school has almost a 70% turnover every year. We also house the child in transition, kids who are in shelters for one reason or another . . . We just recently went back over two years to try and do some tracing of test scores over the past two years and we have had 45 students who've been here. I think there's 470 students in our school or something like that.

> Well, I started the school with 21 kids. I've had 5 or 6 transfer out and 8 or 9 transfer in. And it's beena lot higher in some of the other classrooms. This school has a real high transient rate.

EXCELS participants learned much of the essential knowledge base related to integrating language arts and social studies and most integrated units into their respective classrooms. At this point in time, however, integration at the school level does not appear evident. If it has occurred, EXCELS teachers are not aware of the integration. Typically, major changes like this require four to five years to implement. Future inservice efforts may want to focus on school level communication regarding curriculum development.

EXCELS Final Report

Analysis of Participant Written Products

Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Ed.D.

Introduction of the Evaluation Process

The EXCELS project initiated an extensive change process for teachers and curriculum leaders within the Anchorage School District. Specific goals as outlined in the grant all were predicated on an assumption that change was needed, that change was possible, and that individuals would embrace change as positive and even desirable. These goals included

- developing curriculum standards based on state and national standards in each of the disciplines addressed in the grant.
- developing an inquiry-based, experiential instruction model for teaching.
- integrating social studies and language arts instruction in meaningful ways.
- providing ongoing professional development opportunities for teachers.
- working with university faculty to enhance the K-6 instructional delivery and to consider possibilities for reshaping college-level educational programs.

Literature on change process tends to agree on several points.

- Change is a process that incorporates definable steps.
- Change requires taking into account existing paradigms and their relationship to new ideas.
- Change requires support and collaboration.
- Change is dynamic, evolving, and ongoing.
- Change requires action including developing a vision, a plan, a sense of commitment, and a cadre of supportive change agents.

In other words, if change efforts are to be successful, they must make an effort to account for the individual's existing beliefs and situate the proposed change within those beliefs in a meaningful way. Change requires support; the greater the degree of change the more substantive the support must be. Collaboration as well as peer and mentored support for dealing with dissonance is

essential as former ideologies are shaken by new learning As the change process evolves, participants may require varying degrees of collaboration and support. Both a clear vision and plan are essential to move change forward with a minimum of confusion and frustration. Finally, for any change to having lasting import, a strong and committed cadre of change agents must be developed to carry on the efforts beyond the scope of the original change process.

In order to ascertain the success of the EXCELS model, this report sought to find evidence of growth in each of the areas above as demonstrated in participant writing throughout the EXCELS institute. Optimally, follow up data from these teachers gathered two-three years after the conclusion of this grant could be used to assess the lasting nature of changes that are noted herein.

Descriptions of Papers

The EXCELS institute included over 120 teachers representing a wide range of experiences, expertise, and levels of commitment to the precepts of the grant. As an integral part of the institute, participants were required to submit three papers which chronicled their thinking and growth over the course of three university semesters (approximately one full calendar year). These papers represented thinking in response to experts in content and methods specifically related to national standards in geography, history, civics/government, and English language arts.

Of the original 120 teachers involved in the grant sponsored institute, the full three papers were available for review from 80 participants. These papers proved to be a rich source of information regarding the institutes effectiveness in addressing the goals of the grant and into the evolving struggle of teachers as they attempted to work through their many questions and concerns related to translation of standards into meaningful classroom instruction. This report will attempt to illuminate some of these issues.

Conflicting Messages

Teachers are on the receiving end of many mixed, and sometimes conflicting, messages. As the National Standards movement gained momentum so did discussions of student-centered learning, constructivist classrooms, content-rich instruction, and a host of preferred methodologies (process, inquiry, whole language, etc.). For the teachers involved in the EXCELS institute, a primary task appeared to have been making sense of these varied influences and coming to some sort of personal resolution for their own classrooms.

For many, a particular area of contention developed around the seeming dichotomy of **content-based** and **student-centered learning**. In some cases concern for establishing classrooms that reflected developmentally appropriate practices over-shadowed possibilities presented in standards-based curricula. For a few, this contention continued across the entirety of the institute experience.

> I feel that during the time with Kathy Short and Paul Gagnon I have come to realize that when curriculum is dictated by standards, textbooks, or teachers, it limits the learner's potential. We cannot predict a child's potential; we must have faith in a learner's potential. (CJ)

Numerous papers reflected early struggle with these concepts. Standards were met with both confusion and suspicion: *someone, somewhere else is telling us what to do.* For most, however, final papers reflected a hard fought resolution to this dilemma. One participant (EL) described her year-long struggle to situate both standards and student-centered practices like inquiry-based learning within her "back to basics" school, describing the "standards movement" itself as being much like her own thinking -- a "work in progress". She, and numerous others, reflected a more positive response to Paul Gagnon's use of the term "essentials" to designated those things that every child should know and be able to do instead of the term standards which comes with substantial baggage for many teachers. Another participant, after speaking at length about her own struggle to understand standards wrote:

> When I began this course I wasn't very comfortable with the standards, but now I really feel as though I can make sure I'm implementing them. I also feel comfortable explaining to my co-workers who they can incorporate the standards into their curriculum. (BO)

While many openly resisted "standards" initially as being unrealistic and unfair for some children who enter the classroom with deficits which hamper their learning potential, it appears that the vast majority of the EXCELS participants worked hard to come to terms with standards and their impact on the classroom during the institute.

Interestingly, many participants ultimately moved to a stance that couched standards in the "what" of learning and "student-centered" in the "how". That new view appeared to help them reach a level of comfort with using standards and district-developed curricula to provide a big picture of learning essentials while relying on student-centered, process oriented practices as methods of delivery and, hence, very much within the teacher's control.

A concern from a reviewer's perspective harkens back to Bruner's caution of allowing learners to wander aimlessly within a discipline when the learner may know so little about it that they can not make clear judgments about what is worth exploring. In other words, how can a child know what they are interesting in pursuing if they have no idea what of significance exists within a discipline? For many of the teacher's whose papers were reviewed, the EXCELS Institute appeared to have done a good job in providing a forum for examining that dilemma. Unfortunately, for others, the issues involved still appear to be viewed as mutually exclusive: classroom instruction can be either student-centered or curriculum (standards) driven with no fusing of the concepts.

Closely related to the above concern was a second area of confusion: the ongoing dichotomy of **process** and **content**. A number of participants described experiences with process-based learning gained in writing project institutes.

> I can vividly recall my first experience with learning where the focus was on the PROCESS. It was at a summer institute on the Writing Process. My response to this focus on process was one of excitement and exuberance. I took to carrying a notepad around with me wherever I went because I did not want to miss or lose a thought or an observation of the moment. I became consumed with myself as a writer. The whole experience was almost spiritual in nature because for the first time my learning was relevant to me. I was constantly making personal

> connections to my learning and I was passionately involved in learning to be a writer. (CJ)

In this writing project setting, teachers were encouraged to discuss their own learning processes and to identify processes that were successful for them. They were introduced to the concept that learning is a process. The ensuing enthusiasm for process and its benefits in learning led some to place process at the center of the instructional picture: process became the curriculum. This becomes problematic on many fronts, once again raising questions about what is worth knowing. Fortunately, through a lengthy process of clarification of content (standards/curriculum) and methods (process, etc.) during the institute's discussion group meetings, most participants appeared to come to an understanding of how content (standards/curriculum) provides a frame or a big picture for instruction and how student-centered approaches such as process and inquiry become ways in which that content is approached.

> Two separate aspects of EXCELS helped to move me out of my complacency and to begin seeking a change in my teaching style. A major factor prompting me to change was my immersion in the rich content, provided by each of the experts, who presented the social studies and language arts standards. The in-depth examination and participatory exploration of the standards helped me to glimpse aspects that were missing in my current practices. I think that my past emphasis on process left major gaps in students' schema. Paul Gagnon's assertion that essential subject matter content needs to be at the center of instruction as we honor the varied ways of conveying that content empowered me as a respected facilitator of content rich instruction. The process of 'doing' history, civics, and geography through the organizational framework of the Standards was energizing and edifying. (CJ)

The structure of the EXCELS institute which allowed for interaction with content experts appears to be an essential component that opened participants up to question their own content preparation and to begin to entertain possibilities for viewing instruction differently.

A final issue that was observed in papers related to the changing role of the teacher. For many, the idea that teachers could move beyond didactic delivery models was exciting on the surface and disconcerting in practice. Many papers reflected the struggle to re-define the teacher's role in the classroom.

> Working with many kinds of students over the years has taught me that all students learn differently and at different paces. Not all students come to school with the same set of skills and motivations. The teacher is responsible for making sure the

> students are taught skills needed and have practice using these skills so they become proficient. (EL)
>
> We have brainstormed things the students are interested in, brought in books on a few of those areas and then let the class discover questions they want to find out more about. This allowed them to decide what was important to them, making it more meaningful. Allowing children to design their own investigations has increased their motivation and has encouraged a higher level of thinking. (BO)

These comments were characteristic of many as teachers as they described finding a balance between teacher-driven direct instruction and student-centered, inquiry-based learning. It was clear that few teachers viewed their role in the classroom as diminished. To the contrary, with the vision of the teacher as a "weaver of instruction" who draws from best practices to provide instruction with a content-rich setting, the role of the teacher appears to be more demanding than ever.

Of significance in each of the above areas was the intense and lengthy struggle teachers engaged in to make sense of the complexity inherent in teaching in a conscious manner with full awareness of the competing demands that shape practice. The structure of the EXCELS Institute appeared critical in supporting change. Particularly, small process groups that worked together across the entirety of the institute were cited as important in helping participants work through confusion, questions, and dissonance.

> A second crucial catalyst to my initiation of inquiry was my participation in the EXCELS systemic program of small group processing and reflective writing. In my small group I was able to process my questions concerning the inquiry process. The social structure of this group validated my feelings as I worked through trying new ideas and new ways of thinking. The periodic revision of this paper, accompanied by response to the sessions I wrote in my journal, helped me to reflect on my own unique learning and experiences that have shaped and molded my philosophy. In examining my beliefs I came to realize that my own learning was most dynamic when it was based on finding answers to relevant, self-selected questions in a powerful, purposeful process... inquiry. (CJ)

The EXCELS Institute appeared to provide a rich forum for helping teachers address changes of this magnitude. And, it is important to stress the magnitude of these changes. In many cases teachers were confronting ideologies that ran counter to long held educational practices. One teacher insightfully described the difficulty she confronted in letting go of former practices that had been accepted by students and parents and had felt successful to her as a teacher (EL). Why did she

choose to entertain change? In her words, because she sought growth as a teacher. This becomes an important issue: teachers who are willing to entertain such substantive changes must be individuals who value their own on-going growth and who are strong enough to weather the disequilibrium inherent in change. EXCELS papers indicate that the majority of participants were willing to embark on this journey.

Change Starts with Me...

In a substantial percentage of the final EXCELS papers, it was clear that participants understood the central role of the teacher in the change process. Repeatedly, individuals discussed the problematic nature of change and the complexity involved in finding harmony among a number of competing variables.

> Change in the classroom needs to start with me, the teacher. My attitude needs to be that of a risk-taker. I need to relinquish my control of the students' and allow the students to take charge of their own inquiry process ... I want to incorporate all that I've learned about inquiry into my curriculum, but I haven't figured out how to do it yet. (MA)

A high percentage of participants described in their papers a deepening knowledge of their role in creating reform. Many spoke of change within their own classrooms. Though in lesser numbers, many appeared to perceive their role in helping others as essential -- both in their schools and across their school district -- to move forward the implementation of standards. Further, many individuals expressed an awareness of the on-going and evolving nature of change. Frequent references to the phenomena of continuing to make sense of what had been learned in the EXCELS project indicates an awareness that this learning must continue far into the future.

Perhaps one of the strongest, long-term changes brought about by the EXCELS grant is the heightened sense of importance of theory and philosophy: why are we doing what we are doing.

> ...as a result of my work in EXCELS this summer, I understand the philosophy behind what I do and that I am committed to change as a direct result of my continual inquiry into learning process. (CJ)

The analysis of papers indicates that EXCELS teachers, by and large, ended the institute with a strong sense of their own beliefs and instructional philosophies; this new depth appears to have provided them with stronger voices and a readiness for sharing. Each of these are critical elements if they are to serve as a part of the cadre of EXCELS change agents who continue to promote standards and inquiry beyond the scope of the grant.

Attitudes about Writing and Advancement of Writing Skills

The analysis of early EXCELS papers revealed a surprising lack of confidence in writing. Participants frequently described a reluctance to put thoughts into print and, in perhaps one-half of the papers, references were made to anger and/or resentment that papers were being required. This was somewhat perplexing because graduate credit was attached to institute participation. Perhaps of greater concern was the level of writing competency reflected in the first and second papers with a substantial number containing basic errors in convention and sentence structure.

In each of the earlier papers, participants were attempting to grapple with an enormous amount of information that was coming to them through classes, discussion groups, readings, and personal research. It is likely that, under this level of pressure, the writing of papers was not the highest priority. The final papers reflected, in general, a stronger sense of voice and mechanical construction (sentence structure, word choice, fluency). To assist teachers in gaining a stronger sense of competency, the EXCELS team had arranged interactions with a team of professional writers. These interactions included instructional presentations and review of and response to participants writing and resulted in vastly improved written products: stronger voice and fluency were evident as were all skills connected with editing.

Writing competency in EXCELS papers raises a number of questions. One must consider the possibility that universities are placing too little emphasis on writing for teacher candidates. Writing in paper #3, which benefited from extensive response and revision, reflected great gains in all areas

of the six trait writing rubric used for discussion and assessment purposes. This suggests that teachers are very capable of benefiting from instruction and experience in writing if that instruction is offered. Further, final papers for a number of individuals suggests a growing sense of eagerness to become a part of the many voices in the profession who are attempting to describe and, potentially lead, change.

Clearly, the EXCELS project attracted many fine and capable educators who were willing to be challenged and to challenge themselves. One might assume that these teachers would reflect relatively higher levels of competency in writing than the general population of elementary teachers suggesting a need for emphasis on writing for other teachers as well.

Content Expertise

A major theme across the EXCELS papers were references to positive learning experiences in content areas. As noted in evaluations elsewhere, a major concern leading to the writing of the EXCELS grant was a recognition that elementary teachers are trained as generalist. This circumstance left many unprepared to address the strengthened content requirements inherent in the new standards. Each instructional segment brought participants extensive amounts of new information to ponder and assimilate. Clear evidence exist in many papers that teachers took advantage of both print and human resources to gather new information. In addition, experiences such as geographic field trips, mock trials, and simulations fueled interest in providing elementary students with stronger content backgrounds.

Typically, papers reflected re-thinking content and methods in tandem. It appears that teachers find it difficult to separate the "what" and the "how" as they begin to think about implementing new standards in the classroom. Indeed, while content and methods are two distinct issues, these teachers appear to be constantly seeking ways to make content real, relevant, and interesting to students.

Reference to Curricular Reading

Over half of the EXCELS papers referenced the rich reading opportunities made possible by the grant. Unfortunately, in some cases these materials were not used in any depth.

> The institute spared no expense in providing the participants with current and relevant texts that, when time permits, (may) be read, contemplated upon, and incorporated into our current teaching practices. At this point I have only had time to glance through and sample some of the texts. I am looking forward to perusing most, if not all, of them in the coming year. There are a few books that will have my undivided attention when time allows ...The introductions to these books make them a curiosity that require further exploration. The rest of the books will be wonderful resources if and when I remember to use them. (NFR)

The above was, perhaps, the strongest admission that professional reading was placed on hold during the institute. Numerous other participants discussed in great detail books they had read and connections they had made. In future institute, however, it appears important that more attention be given to texts if participants are to gain full advantage of them.

Contrast to Group Leaders

Among the 120 EXCELS participants, approximately 16 were invited to serve the function of teacher leaders. These individuals, working in teams of two, facilitated the workings of small discussion groups that met throughout the EXCELS institute experience. To support the efforts of this group, additional training days and opportunities were provided. These experiences were accomplished by providing additional release time to work with two of the EXCELS staff members. Among the many issues addressed during these sessions were change process, facilitation skills, processing skills, content information, and personal writing development.

The analysis of papers from the members of this sub-group indicated a high level of synthesis of information emerging from the institute itself. In addition, personal writing tended to reflect amazing growth across the institute in terms of voice and complexity of issues discussed. With only two exceptions, these individuals appeared to tackle the very complicated and serious issues associated with the dichotomies discussed above. Over the course of the three semesters, the

teacher leaders demonstrated a growing strength of confidence in both their opinions and understandings as addressed in their writing.

Although many participants reflected strong growth quotients in their writing, it is clear that this teacher leader group as a whole moved beyond the norm. It is possible that their powers of analysis and synthesis were more developed at the onset. Certainly, each was selected because he or she represented a particular level of content expertise or background experience. In addition, carefully constructed experiences that singled this group out is likely to have made a substantial impact on their development. Through the small group process, the EXCELS institute attempted to mirror the experiences offered to the teacher leaders for all participants. In reality, it is very difficult for such a "trickle-down" model to provide the same quality experience those in training are asked to in turn train others. This appears to be a weakness of many training models; this weakness is not apt to be addressed with sufficient funding to support direct delivery of experiences to all participants.

Staffing Issues

In at least one case an EXCELS participant submitted the same paper, virtually word-for-word, for each of the three papers required. In all three papers this individual argued:

> In as far as the Standards are concerned, I don't think we should put as much emphasis on them as some wish. I don't agree that incorporating standards into the curriculum, as specific as those in the History Standards, is the best approach. In the 992 page document which constitutes the History Standards there are many broad topics with a multitude of other sub- and sub-subtopics. States and local districts are encouraged to choose from these topics, and create their own unique curricular framework. Once this has been accomplished by each state and local district, given the differences between them, we're not going to have true standards anyway--certainly not on a national, or even a state, level …they (university people) probably know all the theory, but, practically speaking, they know no more about how to institute educational reform than I know about brain surgery. (JA)

While it is impossible for any change process to reach every participant, it is disturbing that no change in thinking was evidenced for this individual. Though it is relatively easy to see how this could have happened, it is of concern that this duplication of papers was not discovered. The

EXCELS grant was severely understaffed for dealing with 120 participants on a personal basis. Only one full-time staff member was dedicated to the grant. In addition, one 1/2 time member provided support for most of the institute. Finally, though the two grant coordinators allocated a portion of their overall time, this was done in addition to all the regular functions of their positions. In addition to planning and facilitating the institute, working with teacher leaders, and negotiating with principals in the schools, the staff monitored efforts to move the grant out into the schools and planned extensive inservice offerings to involve over 1,200 teachers.

The unfortunate consequence of this appears to be a lack of time for closely monitoring and nurturing participant growth as demonstrated through papers and other indicators It is likely that a number of the final papers submitted could have been groomed for eventual publication. It is unfortunate that time was not available to help this happen.

Implications for Future Grants

Analysis of papers from the EXCELS grant illustrate vividly the complexity of negotiating curricular change. Clearly, the process involved in carrying national and state standards from paper realities to classroom realities will be lengthy and arduous. The EXCELS institute, as demonstrated by the participants' writings, set out with a clear vision and model. Support and collaboration were provided in small mentoring groups. Rich content was provided in both print and presentation formats. Numerous opportunities to experience new curriculum possibilities were offered. Nonetheless, it is clear that lasting change necessitates time to try new ideas, opportunities to process the results of new attempts, and much time for reflection. All of these appear to be crucial elements in creating change. Perhaps one of the EXCELS teacher leaders provides the best note to end on:

> My goal this year has been to analyze how I teach, how I integrate core subjects and how I promote learning in my classroom. I have refocused my energies to my classroom practices and have been met with more stress, more noise, and more enthusiasm. It's the enthusiasm toward learning that has moved me forward with my goal and kept me from wavering. (EL)

Concluding Remarks

Implementation of the standards in elementary classrooms at the local level.

At the time of the EXCELS grant the national standards documents in Geography, Civics and Government were completed, and three documents were available in History. The National English/Language Arts standards process had been denied additional funding by the U. S. Department of Education and was picked up in a separately funded effort through the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and International Reading Association (IRA). The National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) had also self-funded another national standards document.

The State of Alaska also received funding to develop standards in English/Language Arts which were essentially completed in 1994. The state standards development in Geography, History and Civics/Government was conducted during much of the time of the EXCELS grant. State standards in Economics were also mandated by state legislation but not funded.

These national and state standards were developed essentially in isolation from each other and were at times in open conflict. Further, for the elementary teacher they brought over 1,000 pages of expectations, narratives, and examples. This proliferation of standards provided confusion for EXCELS participants. In particular there was ambiguity as to whether standards were content standards, professional practice standards, or performance standards. In some cases it was unclear whether standards were student standards or teacher standard. Equally unclear was whether teachers should use all of the standards or whether it was their role to pick and choose. Given the fact that many elementary teachers are not required in their undergraduate programs to acquire even a rudimentary content background in some areas they are required to teach, there was sometimes a lack of content context for standards discussions.

In addition the national History standards were under political attack from various individuals and groups. English/Language Arts standards were highly integrated and lacking in content specificity. This problem was paralleled with the NCSS standards.

The EXCELS project assisted teachers in making sense of the plethora of standards documents and translated them into meaningful classroom instructional models. For teachers who deal well with ambiguity, who have a strong content background, and who enjoy exploring the art of teaching, this proved to be an exciting and enriching experience. For others who prefer routine and predictability and working from established models, this process did not provide the recipe for educational excellence that they desired. Teachers are on the receiving end of enormous professional conversations at many levels. For these resources to be most beneficial to teachers the creators of the national standards need to be in direct communication with each other and with classroom teachers in developing materials and professional development activities. For most elementary teachers, there is just too much to focus on.

Elementary teachers are called upon to have content expertise in a dozen content areas. EXCELS provided an important resource to teachers by providing content-rich active learning situations which directly addressed classroom instruction.

Challenges in Facilitating Educational Change

Teachers involved in educational movements will often quickly cite abandoned attempts or movements which either failed or disappeared. They will describe an educational pendulum that swings back and forth. By this they mean that Federal, state and local support for standards varies based upon the changing political climate as do particular types of pedagogy. Many school districts have a history of starting far more projects than they complete because of the rapidly changing educational currents. These historical circumstances unfortunately make some teachers reluctant to climb aboard the next educational band wagon. In any major effort such as EXCELS, this type of

negative history must be overcome. Evidence clearly shows that EXCELS did an excellent job of building a community, enthusiasm, and momentum among many of the teacher participants. It also built an understanding and ownership for the utility and application of the standards and inquiry processes to participants' classrooms. Also, site teams and others became engaged in the excitement of synthesizing rich information, creating models for classroom application, and opening up all of these elements to the broader community.

The Local Educational Environment

The Anchorage School District was involved at the time of the EXCELS project with numerous curriculum-related efforts, all of which imposed demands upon teacher time and attention. Further, administrative requirements created conflicting time requirements for principals, EXCELS staff, inservice usage, and financial resources. Despite these conflicts, teachers report that professional growth and transfer of content and methodologies into classrooms took place at a significant level. Nonetheless, greater gains could have been realized if the Board, superintendent, and upper administration had articulated a clearer vision of how these educational initiatives fit into the mosaic of curricular reform.

EXCELS: A New Anchorage School District Professional Development Model

Historically the Anchorage School District offered a vast array of one-credit university courses, workshops and a few more complex two- to four-credit institutes or courses. EXCELS significantly changed this expectation by offering long term, sustained, intensive professional development with exceedingly high expectations. The classroom-based research component encouraged examination of professional belief systems and examination of the effectiveness of one's own practice. Fortunately, mentor groups provided an essential resource to help teachers work through the anxiety and dissonance that accompanies such evaluation. This high level of professional thinking was welcomed by most participants. Unfortunately, teachers who have a low tolerance for ambiguity and change found this process disconcerting. Though choice,

collaboration, and opportunities for risk taking appear to be valuable elements of successful staff development they may be needed less for some teachers than others. For this reason, a school district is well advised to offer a diversified staff development program.

Extending EXCELS and the Standards to All Elementary Staff.

A number of components supported the extending of Project EXCELS to all elementary staff. These included site teams, work with principals, work with community groups, district-wide inservices and brief university credit courses. Each of these components has greater value when they are extended over a long period of time and properly nurtured to facilitate institutional change. A three-year time period may be too short for the best outcome to be fully realized when administrative vision is being formed rather than being clearly established.

The district-wide inservice on October 14, 1996 provided a strong training component that stimulated standards-based classroom application in a wider circle than previously practiced within schools. Reports indicate that staff conversations became more inclusive of standards-based instruction and inquiry strategies. The credit courses offered during the 1996-7 school year provided further work for teachers not in the original EXCELS institute. These efforts should be continued in credit courses and district-wide training by the Anchorage School District by drawing upon the talents of the EXCELS Institute graduates.

Site teams and mini-grants provided new contexts for curriculum conversations in schools. When supported by administrators and strong EXCELS participants, site work blossomed into a variety of school and staff experiences that incorporated the standards, inquiry, and other EXCELS thinking into the school culture and classroom. However, not enough EXCELS staff existed to nurture this model to the degree needed and the site development that occurred was uneven. Experience indicates that site teams actually require greater central staffing to nurture the site work of nearly 60 elementary schools.

EXCELS Core Team

Due to the teachers' strike and other circumstances surrounding the start of the EXCELS grant, internal confusion developed regarding the roles and tasks of EXCELS staff. Because staff came from different disciplines, educational philosophies, experiences, and teaching levels, the EXCELS staff represented a rich talent bank. Unfortunately, because minimal time was available for task and role clarification or team building, some of the potential of the core group was not realized. In addition, throughout the grant funding period, project co-coordinators had to give up time dedicated to EXCELS planning and implementation when they were called upon to address many day-to-day functions in their District positions as curriculum coordinators. This situation seriously limited the time they could devote to the EXCELS project.

Local Standards Development

At the end of the EXCELS grant the national political winds have changed so that national standards are now discussed less frequently. State and local standards tied to assessment provide more impetus for local discussions than they did when EXCELS started. In dissemination activities across the United States EXCELS staff have noted that many states and local communities developed a fear of the imposition of the national standards. This is unfortunate because the national standards in Geography, History, Civics/Government and Economics now provide some powerful resources for states and local communities to use in developing standards. EXCELS staff recommends that revision of these national standards be conducted on a regular basis but with greater attention to decreasing the cumulative impact of the multitude of standards documents on elementary classrooms. While the NCSS and NCTE standards documents are not very useful to teachers, there is probably a more realistic middle ground that can and should be addressed to increase standards implementation at the elementary level across the nation. Perhaps this is the role that the states and local districts will fill. The unfortunate aspect of this is that, unlike EXCELS, most states and local districts can not bring those who create standards together with elementary

classroom teachers to develop realistic and appropriate standards and include classroom-based strategies.

In conclusion, EXCELS ambitiously sought to connect elementary classrooms to the national standards movement in Geography, History, Civics/Government and the language arts. The EXCELS staff believes that the grant provided a major step forward in helping elementary teachers to develop not only an understanding of standards and inquiry-based education but also extend these elements into classrooms across the Anchorage School District. Significant teacher training and other supportive activities took place to help make this happen.

To extend the work further for institutionalization in the Anchorage School District, EXCELS Evaluator Dr. Sandra Stotsky recommended that local standards for English/Language Arts and Geography, History, and Civics/Government be developed for elementary grades which draw upon the work of the national and state standards.

We recognize that the Anchorage School District is fortunate to have the EXCELS teachers who have worked intensively in applying standards to the classroom. We believe that these people should be used as key resources in leading the development of ASD elementary standards. At this time, the district is planning to test drafts of K-8 standards during the 1998-9 school year and plans to finalize local standards in Language Arts, Reading, and Math. The Social Sciences and other areas are presently slated for later development during the 1999-2000 school year. Thus it is evident that the school district is thinking much more about standards and how these elements help to provide our students with important educational foundations. EXCELS was a major factor in this transition.

In closing, the Anchorage School District and the EXCELS staff wishes to express their gratitude to the U.S. Department of Education, FIE and the Department's program staff with whom we

have had the pleasure of working. This includes program officers Jaymie Lewis and Steven Rue who have been responsive to our requests and always willing to help us resolve questions and issues as they arose. We believe that the funding for Project EXCELS has provided a tremendous professional development impetus in standards which has and continues to improve curriculum, professional development, and classrooms in the district. Further, many participants have observed many ways in which EXCELS has changed both their personal and professional lives. These are impacts that we believe will live in the district to serve children for years to come.

APPENDIX A

National Presenters

Dr. Kathy Short, University of Arizona, Associate Professor of Children's Literature and Reading. She serveed on the Elementary Section for the National Council of Teachers of English and has been instrumental in the review of content standards in English/Language Arts.

Dr. Paul Gagnon, Boston University, Director of FIRST (Fund for the Improvement and Reform of Schools and Teaching, United States Department of Education) and a Professor of History. He was a key leader in the national standards movement.

Rev. Dr. Michael Oleksa, University of Alaska Southeast, worked intensively with schools to support cross-cultural communications.

Dr. Christopher Salter, University of Missouri-Columbia, Professor and Chair of the Department of Geography. Dr. Salter was the Project Co-chair and Co-author of the National Geography Standards.

Cathy Salter, member of the Geography National Standards Writing Committee and geography teacher consultant.

Jack Hoar, Director for Justice Education at the Center for Civic Education and staff associate to the Civics and Government National Standards Project.

Beth Earley Farnbach, Director of Educational Services for the Center for Civic Education and staff associate to the Civics and Government National Standards Project.

Ken Rodriquez, staff associate to the Civics and Government National Standards Project and associate with the Center for Civic Education.

Elaine Wrisley Reed, Executive Secretary for the National Council for History Education.

Dr. Dennis Denenberg, Professor of Elementary Education, Millersville University, and consultant to the National Council for History Education.

Dr. Arthur Zilversmit, Distinguished Service Professor of History, Lake Forest College, and consultant to the National Council for History Education.

Annette (Nancy) Taylor, elementary teacher at St. Michael School in Worthington, Ohio and consultant for the National Council for History Education.

Dr. Miriam Chaplin, Professor and Education Department Chair, Rutgers University, and the President of the National Council of Teachers of English.

APPENDIX B

EXCELS: Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links among Standards, Parts I, II, and III

An Institute for Professional Teachers, K-6

This **full-year interdisciplinary institute** is funded by the **U.S. Department of Education** as a part of the new Anchorage School District EXCELS Program. The institute is offered as a ten credit block, four credits to take place in May/June of 1995, three credits during the fall of 1995, and three credits to take place during the spring of 1996. Participants will investigate and utilize the inquiry process as a way of developing professional knowledge and skills in geography, history, civics/government, and English/language arts. Through phase one, teachers will use inquiry process to explore their own educational philosophy and belief systems and examine how these affect their own classrooms. Also during phase one, teachers will examine the national standards movement and cross-disciplinary instruction between English/language arts and the social sciences (history, geography, and civics/government). In phase two, participants will explore new metaphors for learning and apply these to the task of creating new classroom learning environments with specific emphasis upon geography and civics/government. Phase three of the institute will focus upon English/language arts and history and upon examining writing as a tool for articulating professional learning. In total, the institute will deal with the melding of theory, standards, and practice and will explore interdisciplinary instruction and curricular directions for the 21st century.

This experience is designed to provide the equivalent of a one-credit class with the out-of-state national leaders providing eight credits. The additional two credits will be facilitated by district personnel. The institute will address the topics listed below and is intended to address the on-going professional needs of professional educators who wish to pursue their own growth in an aggressive contemporary manner.

Major Objectives

- Investigate inquiry process: Inquiry as a way of knowing.
- Investigate teacher philosophy and belief systems and their impact on classrooms.
- Explore content knowledge/standards in English/language arts, geography, history, civics/government.
- Investigate speaking, listening, reading, and writing as ways of clarifying thinking.
- Investigate processes for thinking geographically, politically, and historically.
- Practice reading and writing as a tool for articulating professional learning.
- Meld theory and practice to foster creating thinking environments.

INSTRUCTORS:

Dr. Kathy Short, University of Arizona
Dr. Paul Gagnon, Boston University
Dr. Chrisopher (Kit) Salter, University of Missouri-Columbia
Cathy Salter, Geography Consultant
Jack Hoar, Center for Civic Education
Beth Earley Farnbach, Center for Civic Education
Elaine Wrisley Reed, National Council for History Education
Dr. Miriam Chaplin, Rutgers University
Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Anchorage School District
Barbara Bernard, Anchorage School District
Mary Bristol, Anchorage School District
Douglas Phillips, Anchorage School District

CREDIT:

Ten graded graduate credits (600 level, pending UAA approval)

DATES AND TIMES: **Phase I**: 8 hours in May, 1995
June 12-16, 1995 and June 19-23, 1995
Phase II: October/November, 1995
Phase III: January and March/April, 1996
(Exact dates and times are being finalized but will be provided to participants in April at the time of acceptance)

LOCATION: **TBA**

TUITION: Teachers selected for this institute will have all tuition and course expenses provided through the EXCELS grant.

ENROLLMENT LIMITS: Two teachers per elementary school

INFORMATION: For additional information about this institute please contact any of the above listed Anchorage School District Personnel at 269-2242 or 269-2184.

Tentative Schedule

Orientation sessions:	**May 11 & 23, 1995**	**4:00-8:00**
Class with Kathy Short	**June 12-16, 1995**	**8:30-4:30**
Class with Paul Gagnon	**June 19-23, 1995**	**8:30-4:30**
Follow up to sessions with Kathy Short and Paul Gagnon. Preparation for Salters	**September, 1995 (TBA)**	**4:00-7:00**
Class with Kit & Cathy Salter	**October, 1995 (15 hours)**	**Times TBA**
Follow up class	**TBA**	**4:00-7:00**
Class with Jack Hoar and Beth Earley Farnbach	**November, 1995 (15 hours)**	**Times TBA**
Follow up class	**TBA**	**4:00-7:00**
Class with Paul Gagnon, Elaine Wrisley Reed, and NCHE	**January24-27, 1995 (15 hours)**	**Times TBA**
Follow up class	**TBA**	
Class With Miriam Chaplin	**March/April, 1996 (15 hours)**	**Times TBA**
Follow up class	**TBA**	
Wrap-up work	**April, 1996**	**TBA**

***Final schedule will be made available to all applicants.**

APPLICATION FOR EXCELS INSTITUTE , 1995-96

NAME:_____

SCHOOL:_____

GRADE
LEVEL(S):_____

ADDRESS:_____

_____

PLEASE ADDRESS EACH OF THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS ON A SEPARATE SHEET OF PAPER, ATTACH THIS FORM, AND RETURN TO PROJECT EXCELS, CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTIONAL SERVICES , ADM. BUILDING ,BEFORE MARCH 15, 1995. YOUR APPLICATION MAY BE FAXED TO 269-2325

1. Please discuss briefly your reasons for wishing to be involved in this institute.
2. Describe ways in which you currently link language arts and social studies.
3. What do you hope to learn from this institute?
4. What special contribution will you be making to this institute.

USE EXTRA SHEET AS NECESSARY

APPENDIX C

Course Proposals:

TITLE: ED. 693 - Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links among Standards, Part I

INSTRUCTORS: Kathy Short, University of Arizona
Paul Gagnon, Boston University
Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Anchorage School District
Doug Phillips, Anchorage School District
Barbara Bernard, Anchorage School District
Mary Bristol, Anchorage School District

CREDIT: Total of 4 credit: April 1995 through August 1995

PROGRAM: Education, Self support institute for practicing teachers

APPROVED BY: _____ **DATE:** January 20, 1995

COURSE DESIGN:

a. Description: This summer institute is developed to be offered as a four credit, intensive session leading into a full two semester instruction and research block during the 1995-96 school year. Developed with grant support from the United States Department of Education and in collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education, this institute and the course sequence that follows will provide a major contribution toward developing an interdisciplinary implementation model of national standards in geography, civic/government, history and English/language arts.

Week one of the institute will begin by investigating the inquiry process as a way of developing professional knowledge. Teachers will use inquiry process to explore their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examine how these affect their own classrooms, look at issues related to curricular linkages and student learning, and investigate research models for examining practice in their own classrooms. In addition, teachers will be introduced to the process and content of the state and national standards in language arts and reading.

Week two will lead participants through the processes that have led to the development of national standards and will create a

Week two will lead participants through the processes that have led to the development of national standards and will create a context for inquiry and for translation of the social studies themes and standards into practice consistent with articulated learning theory.

Extensive pre-reading, within institute reading, and follow up reading will be required. Though registration will take place at the beginning of each part of the full-year institute (summer, fall, spring), teachers will be asked to commit to a full year of study.

b. 4 credits total. Institute is to be offered as Part I of a three part, full-year institute. Sessions will begin in April of 1995 and follow through late August of 1995.

c. Contact hours: 60 hours of contact time with nationally known lecturers and local facilitator/teachers.

d. N/A

e. Course designed for practicing teachers in the K-6 schools. It is assumed that participants are already certified and have familiarity with the current ASD program. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders.

This course is not intended to meet under-graduate degree requirements.

f. This course offering represents a collaboration among the Anchorage School District's Social Studies Program, the Language Arts Program and the School of Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The course is a one-time offering and is offered on a self-support basis.

g. NA

II. **ACTIVITIES:** (types of strategies you will use in class)

This class (institute) will utilize a variety of instructional methods and will parallel methods that are desirable in K-6 classrooms.

•**individual inquiry:** Participants will engage in investigating their own inquiry cycle through the identification of their own questions.

•**group discussion and task groups:** Participants will participate in frequent discussions of professional materials and lectures as well as their own inquiry.

•**lectures:** Visiting lecturers will address each of the focus topics for the institute in formal lectures.

•**workshops:** Teachers will engage in formal and informal workshop activities with both visiting lecturers and local instructor/facilitators.

•**reading:** Extensive reading of professional materials will be required.

•**writing:** Participants will engage in both informal and formal writing activities. Learning logs and response papers will be required. In addition, each participant will engage in their own inquiry/research project that will be written up as a research project or formal professional article for publication.

III. **Prerequisite:**

Valid Alaska teaching certificate. Full time teaching status with the Anchorage School District preferred.

a. NA

b. Assumption is that participants are already certified and have familiarity with current language arts and social studies content and methods. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders and is directed to teachers who are highly motivated and willing to be risk takers..

c. NA

d. May satisfy elective requirements for Masters level study depending on School of Education approval for individuals.

e. No other formal prerequisites.

IV. **Evaluation:** (how will you evaluate the students)

a. Grading will be done on the basis of

•student presentations of inquiry in process;
•learning logs and reflective papers;
•participation in professional discussions and workshops;
•completion of required professional readings;
•completion of personal research project culminating in a formal paper or professional article.

Grading Criteria:

•Class attendance at all sessions.....20 points
•Participation in discussions.....20 points
•Completion of required readings as evidenced through learning logs and journals.....20 points
•Research proposal describing in detail the nature of proposed research question to be explored, datat collection procedures, and intended subjects.....30 points
•Sharing of work in research work-in-progress.....10 points

Grades:

100-90 points.....A
89-80 points.....B
79-70 points.....C
69-60 points.....D
59 or less points.....F

V. **COURSE OUTLINE:**

May, 1995:

Total of eight hours to introduce participants to the background for the institute, to introduce the professional readings, and to begin the process of identifying their own professional questions relevant to the study..

June, 1995:

Total of sixty hours with Dr. Kathy Short, University of Arizona and Dr. Paul Gagnon, Boston

University to begin an intensive investigation into inquiry process and procedure, national standards issues, curriculum linkages, and the literary/historical/political/geographic issues relevant to the study.

August, 1995:

Total of four hours in small group discussion of professional readings, issues arising from participant inquiry, and discussion of pre-readings for the fall class in geography standards.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND DEFINED OUTCOMES:

Goals:

- to understand the inquiry process as a method of increasing professional knowledge and practice;
- to understand the impact of teacher philosophy and belief system on classroom planning;
- to gain content knowledge in the areas of geography, civics, and history and apply such knowledge to classroom practice consistent with learning theory;
- to understand methods for enhancing thinking skills in the classroom;
- to set up learning environments that reflect creative thinking environments.
- to investigate speaking, listening, reading, and writing as ways of clarifying knowledge and thinking;
- to explore reading and writing as vehicles for exploring professional beliefs and practices;
- to investigate the implications of theory in the classroom.

Outcomes:

- demonstrate content knowledge and theory relevant to the teaching of geography, civics, history, writing and literature;

- be able to articulate own philosophy of teaching and to cite educational researchers who support those beliefs;
- be able to set up an inquiry cycle in own classroom;
- utilize learning logs, reflective writing and response to literature in own classroom;
- complete own research process;
- complete a research-based paper, unit, or article based on personal research study.

TITLE: ED. 693 - Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links among Standards, Part II

INSTRUCTORS: Christopher Salter, University of Missouri-Columbia
Kathy Riggs-Salter, teacher consultant
Jack Hoar, Long Beach Unified School District
Beth Earley Farnbach, Center for Civics Education
Doug Phillips, Anchorage School District
Barbara Bernard, Anchorage School District
Mary Bristol, Anchorage School District
Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Anchorage School District

CREDIT: Total of 3 credit: October 1995 through December 1995

PROGRAM: Education, Self support institute for practicing teachers

APPROVED BY: _____ **DATE:** January 20, 1995

COURSE DESIGN:

a. Description: This three credit class extending from September through December, 1995 is offered as the second part of a three part block: a four credit summer institute extending from May through August of 1995 and a full-semester follow up class extending from January through May of 1996. Developed with grant support from the United States Department of Education and in collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education, this course sequence will provide a major contribution toward developing an

interdisciplinary implementation model of national standards in geography, civics/government, history, and English/language arts.

Session one of the fall block will include a fifteen hour class focused on the national standards in geography. This session will be offered by national and local experts. Teachers will be provided extensive print materials, lectures, and discussion to fuel their own inquiry process leading to an exploration of their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examination of how these affect their own classrooms, investigation into issues related to curricular linkages and student learning, and investigation into research models for examining practice in their own classrooms.

Session two will allow interaction time with local university professors, teacher-leaders and local facilitators as participants examine their own classrooms, compile data related to their instructional questions, and discuss their findings, concerns, and further questions in research groups.

Session three will include a fifteen hour class focused on the civics/government standards. Teachers will be provided extensive print materials, lectures, and opportunities for discussion to fuel their own inquiry process leading to an exploration of their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examination of how these affect their own classrooms, investigation into issues related to curricular linkages, and student learning, and investigation into research models for examining practice in their own classrooms.

Extensive reading will be required.

b. 3 credits total.

c. Contact hours: 45 hours of contact time with nationally known lecturers and local facilitator/teachers.

d. N/A

e. Course designed for practicing teachers in the K-6 schools. It is assumed that participants are already certified and have familiarity with the current ASD program. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders.

This course is not intended to meet under-graduate degree requirements.

f. This course offering represents a collaboration among the Anchorage School District's Social Studies Program, Language Arts Program, and the School of Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The course is offered on a self-support basis.

g. NA

II. **ACTIVITIES:** (types of strategies you will use in class)

This class (institute) will utilize a variety of instructional methods and will parallel methods that are desirable in K-6 classrooms.

•**individual inquiry:** Participants will engage in investigating their own inquiry cycle through the identification of their own questions.

•**group discussion and task groups:** Participants will participate in frequent discussions of professional materials and lectures as well as their own inquiry.

•**lectures:** Visiting lecturers will address each of the focus topics for the institute in formal lectures.

•**workshops:** Teachers will engage in formal and informal workshop activities with both visiting lecturers and local instructor/facilitators.

•**reading:** Extensive reading of professional materials will be required.

•**writing:** Participants will engage in both informal and formal writing activities. Learning logs and response papers will be required. In addition, each participant will engage in their own inquiry/research project that will be written up as a research project or formal professional article for publication.

III. **Prerequisite:**

Valid Alaska teaching certificate.
Participation in Part I of this sequence.
Full time teaching status with the Anchorage School District preferred.

a. NA

b. Assumption is that participants are already certified and have familiarity with current language arts and social studies content and methods. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders and is directed toward teachers who are highly motivated and willing to be risk takers. Recruitment of teachers will be limited to employees of the Anchorage School District.

c. NA

d. May satisfy elective requirements for Masters level study depending on School of Education approval for individuals.

e. No other formal prerequisites.

IV. **Evaluation:** (how will you evaluate the students)

a. Grading will be done on the basis of :

- student presentations of inquiry in process;
- learning logs and reflective papers;
- participation in professional discussions and workshops;
- completion of required professional readings;
- completion of personal research project with paper or article.

Grading Criteria:

- Class attendance at all sessions.....20 points
- Participation in discussions.....20 points
- Completion of required readings as evidenced through learning logs and journals.....20 points
- Research proposal describing in detail the nature of proposed research question to be explored, data collection procedures, and intended subjects.....30 points

•Sharing of work in research work-in-progress.....10 points

Grades:

100-90 points.....A
89-80 points.....B
79-70 points.....C
69-60 points.....D
59 or less points.....F

V. COURSE OUTLINE:

October, 1995:

Total of fifteen hours of intensive interaction with national speakers in the area of geography intended to introduce participants to the national standards in this area and to explore curricular implications and linkages. Further, this session will continue the exploration into teachers' instructional questions relevant to classroom practice utilizing the new themes and standards.

November, 1995:

Total of fifteen hours with local teacher-leaders in research groups to begin intensive investigation through inquiry process and procedure into teaching within the framework of national standards.

December, 1995:

Total of fifteen hours of intensive interaction with national speakers in the area of civics intended to introduce participants to the national standards in this area and to explore curricular implications and linkages. Further, this session will continue the exploration into teachers' instructional questions relevant to classroom practice utilizing the new themes and standards.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND DEFINED OUTCOMES:

Goals:

•to understand the inquiry process as a method of increasing professional knowledge and practice;

- to understand the impact of teacher philosophy and belief system on classroom planning;
- to gain content knowledge in the areas of geography, civics, and history and apply such knowledge to classroom practice consistent with learning theory;
- to understand methods for enhancing thinking skills in the classroom;
- to set up learning environments that reflect creative thinking environments.
- to investigate speaking, listening, reading, and writing as ways of clarifying knowledge and thinking;
- to explore reading and writing as vehicles for exploring professional beliefs and practices;
- to investigate the implications of theory in the classroom.

Outcomes:

- demonstrate content knowledge and theory relevant to the teaching of geography, civics, history, writing and literature;
- be able to articulate own philosophy of teaching and to cite educational researchers who support those beliefs;
- be able to set up an inquiry cycle in own classroom;
- utilize learning logs, reflective writing and response to literature in own classroom;
- complete own research process;
- complete a research-based paper, unit, or article based on personal research study.

TITLE: ED. 693 - Extending Curricular Effectiveness through Links among Standards, Part III

INSTRUCTORS: Elaine Reed National Council for History Education
Paul Gagnon, Boston University
Miriam Chaplin, Rutgers University
Doug Phillips, Anchorage School District
Rebecca Bowers Sipe, Anchorage School District
Barbara Bernard, Anchorage School District
Mary Bristol, Anchorage School District

CREDIT: Total of 3 credit: January 1996 through May 1996

PROGRAM: Education, Self support institute for practicing teachers

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE: January 20, 1995

COURSE DESIGN:

a. **Description:** This three credit classes is offered as the third part of a three part block: a four credit summer institute extending from May through August of 1995 and a full-semester class extending from September through December, 1995. Developed with grant support from the United States Department of Education and in collaboration with the University of Alaska Anchorage School of Education, this course sequence will provide a major contribution toward developing an interdisciplinary implementation model of national standards in geography, civics/government and English/language arts.

Session one of the spring block will include a fifteen hour class focused on the national history standards. This session will be offered by national and local experts. Teachers will be provided extensive print materials, lectures, and discussion to fuel their own inquiry process leading to an exploration their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examination of how these affect their own classrooms, investigation into issues related to curricular linkages and student learning, and investigation into research models for examining practice in their own classrooms.

Session two will allow interaction time with local teacher-leaders and local facilitators as participants examine their own classrooms, compile data related to their instructional questions, and discuss their findings, concerns, and further questions in research groups.

Session three will include a fifteen hour class focused on the English/language arts standards. Teachers will be provided extensive print materials, lectures, and discussion to fuel their own inquiry process leading to an exploration their own educational philosophy and belief systems, examination of how these affect their own classrooms, investigation into issues related to curricular linkages and student learning, and investigation into research models for examining practice in their own classrooms.

Extensive reading will be required.

APPENDIX D

Paper/EXCELS Summer Institute

EXCELS Summer Institute Paper: The purpose of the paper is to explore your questions and insights about teaching social studies and language arts through reflection on the information and perspectives of our presenters, participants, readings and your own journal entries. This reflection should help synthesize your current best thinking about your teaching in these areas and raise questions that you would like to explore further. Through your writing consider the relationships between learning, instruction, and curriculum organization for your own classroom.

Overview: This paper represents a final draft product from the summer but is viewed as an "in progress" work to be further explored next fall and spring. Your paper should:

- contain your best thinking at this time in 5-7 pages, typed and double-spaced;
- reference speakers, readings, conversations as appropriate to support your thoughts and conclusions;
- include a bibliography of your readings.

Please be sure your paper arrives at the Language Arts office in the Administration Building by Friday morning, June 30. Grades will be submitted to the university by the end of that day.

Computers in the teachers' workroom are available for your use during lunch.

If you have any questions about your paper, you are invited to talk with Becky. She can be reached the week of June 26-30 at her office number (269-2242).

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

EXCELS Institute
Fall, 1995
Course Requirements

- **Attendance at all sessions (required for university credit).**

- **Participation in large and small group discussions.**

- **Completion of journal writing and assigned readings**

- **Through a process of peer response and course work throughout the semester, revise and re-submit the course paper. Papers will be due one week after the final EXCELS class for the semester. Incompletes can not be accepted.**

  Future Writing: Begin making and sharing grade-level connections between language arts and social studies curriculum. Lots of opportunities will present themselves for writing next semester.

EXCELS Institute
Spring, 1996
Course Requirements

- **Attendance at all sessions required for university credit. This includes small group sessions, sessions with outside presenters, and February 10th .**

  Thorough make up work will be available in the event of emergencies or illness.

- **Participation in large and small group discussions.**

- **Completion of assigned reading and writing.**

- **Future writing. Both this semester's written product and future opportunities will be discussed at a later time. The focus of this semester's work is to continue making connections among standards, inquiry, and local curriculum.**

EXCELS FINAL PAPER
Spring 1996

Due Date
Friday April 26, 1996

As you revise your EXCELS paper for the final time please share with the reader your thoughts on the following questions:

1) What personal meaning have you made as a result of being involved in EXCELS?

2) How has your involvement in EXCELS effected your classroom practice?

3)How did this experience further your understanding of:

- standards
- inquiry
- integrated curriculum

APPENDIX E

Week One:

Monday	**8:30-9:00**	**Little Theater/General Opening** **•EXCELS Etiquette** **•General Introduction**
	9:00-10:15	**Father O.**
	10:15-10:45	**Break**
	10:45-12:00	**Presentation**
	12:00-1:00	**Working lunch**
	1:00-2:15	**Father O.**
	2:15-2:30	**Break**
	2:30-3:00	**Kathy Short**
Tuesday-Friday		
	8:30-9:00	**Stage setting/De-briefing**
	9:00-12:00	**Presentational block with a 30 minute break**
	12:00-12:45	**Lunch**
	12:45-2:15	**Presentational block**
	2:15-2:30	**Break**
	2:30-3:00	**Small group de-brief**

Week Two:

Monday	**8:30-9:00**	**Opening**
	9:00-10:15	**Presentational block**
	10:15-10:45	**Break**
	10:45-12:00	**Presentational block**
	12:00-1:00	**Working lunch**
	1:00-2:15	**Presentational block**
	2:15-2:30	**Break**
	2:30-3:00	**Paul Gagnon Introduction**
Tuesday-Thursday		
	8:30-9:00	**Stage setting/De-briefing**
	9:00-12:00	**Presentational block with a 30 minute break**
	12:00-12:45	**Lunch**
	12:45-2:15	**Presentational block**
	2:15-2:30	**Break**
	2:30-3:00	**Small group de-brief**
Friday	**8:30-9:00**	**Stage setting/De-briefing**
	9:00-12:00	**Presentational block with a 30 minute break**
	12:00-1:45	**Lunch***

***Last Friday must include readiness for Salters from 8:30-9:00. Cookout will run from 12:00-1:45. Journaling will take place during the first seven minutes of group discussion time.**

APPENDIX F

EXCELS Principal Interviews
May 14, 1997

1. As you know it, what curriculum change did the excels program accomplish in your school?

We had teachers' release time and we also met after school. We have 2-way emersion program (Spanish and English). Did a complete revamp of the curriculum to articulate across grades. Exciting project.

Gave us contemporary view of what curriculum is coming to. Teachers are looking at integration and curriculum differently. For me (the principal) integration comes naturally because I worked in the bush.

Gave staff a level of excitement and social studies program.

We've had schoolwide themes and events, e.g., water theme and it was an incredible bringing together of social studies, math, science, and language arts. That's what I see the greatest results of EXCELS--giving teachers time to plan this kind of curriculum cooperation (release time) and training teachers attended. Half days for five teachers going on this very day. Meeting to choose themes for next year--heroes. Planning by team then they present ideas at staff meeting and faculty goes from there.

Supported the work we were already doing on interdisciplinary instruction. Bought release time for planning. Wrote a grant this year and had a person come in and do some writing w

We had a mini grant to work social studies into our internet goals. Last week we had a Net Day. How to do searches for social studies project. Use EXCELS money for courses to learn internet computer skills for 15 or 16 people (Introduction to the Internet). Hands-on school site based instruction on using internet in the social studies (Andy from Alpengow Elementary was the teacher). What can teachers do with a computer? All classroom teachers were given half a day release time--either computer training or observation of how other teachers use computers and computers labs. Will e-mail teachers in other schools. "We really got our moneys worth." Look forward to networking.

Principal took one of the computer courses: "I felt like a colleague. Lot of collaboration (in this technology training)."

Teachers did not have time to learn the new social studies curriculum and EXCELS provided the time to do this at grade level--for example in the fourth grade to research and team teach the new social studies focus on early civilizations. Students presented on this cross age. Teachers of Scenic Park

came up with a teachers notebook with EXCELS projects with themes fitting into new social studies curriculum.

Scenic Park teacher statement: Shared ideas in depth. Literature techniques and inquiry--raised staff morale. We plan units together. We shared ideas and teaching techniques. Principal was a leader.

Prior to EXCELS our school developed a concept of multi-culture and multi-ethnic celebration. Then at our site EXCELS developed full multi-cultural relationships with our social studies curriculum--piggy-backed our concept and EXCELS provided the organizational element. Teachers went to training and release time gave the impetus.

EXCELS program concentrated kindergarten, first and second grades. Had best intentions to attend meetings of teachers but I did not attend. Feedback I've gotten is the EXCELS program has enabled more curriculum change and (conversations) on curriculum topics in our school in the best format that I have seen. For example, when we have staff meetings for curriculum discussion there is varied reception but I understand at EXCELS meetings teachers come with questions, techniques, ready for feedback and sharing. They have enjoyed themselves. Teachers in EXCELS want to be there--bonding experience at staff meetings not there as in EXCELS meetings among EXCELS teachers.

2. Please describe the process of EXCELS implementation that took place here in your building

Used EXCELS with big TITLE VII grant for restructuring Asked the question: What do we deliver and how do we coordinate so not hit and miss. Wanted a program that built on one another. In service preceded EXCELS then EXCELS pushed this process to fill holes and gaps.
Sixth grade teachers expanded from sixth grade into what (curriculum) would occur in junior high. By utilization of staff meeting, having time (time IS the critical factor) we looked at the other grades in our school, too. Grade level meetings provided by release time. helped in this People have had half days to see others in other schools. Gone into community. Teachers came back with more questions than had answers for. Curiosity of teachers raised. That's what learning is about

During staff meetings we set aside some staff meetings to discuss EXCELS and what we would do with that program. Two teachers were leaders. Know classroom teachers did geography and climates and building houses, etc. Teachers all involved because social studies school-wide goal. Did teacher constructed pre and post tests as part of master plan for this school-wide goal.

I've been involved in new social studies program; did all the ordering for the new curriculum; found that EXCELS good for reading and writing program and the social studies curriculum.

The process of (implementation) was at the teacher level. I was only involved as a consultant or perhaps manager. I was involved in planning some interdisciplinary units but they (teachers) actually did the teaching and evaluating. At outset team was all involved and tried to involve others. Moderately successful in that.

A school goal is the integration of curriculum. Lot of faculty time was given to EXCELS goals. Team gave release time to faculty to meet at grade level. Take materials and implement them with teacher collaboration at grade levels. Started out with schoolwide curriculum and moved to grade level.

Had grade level meetings. Core EXCELS team had one representative at each grade level. Principal always met with core team. (paper trail exists on core team activities).

EXCELS gave us time to plan schoolwide to accomplish multicultural concept. Curriculum is basically integrated.

3. **Have efforts been made to connect social studies and other subjects like the language arts? If so, please describe what is being done differently in the social studies. What is being done differently in the language arts?**

Used Solaris Themes with social studies themes and coordinated them in social studies and language arts. Grade level themes by month--plan to coincide with (restructuring) vision. Assessment of students in Spanish and English and having conversations to limit the number of tests. Looking at present outcomes and trying to make tests count.

Using the community more is part of the EXCELS legacy. Reading the teachers' feedback, teachers were interested from walking tour of Anchorage.

Lot of integration with writing; fourth grade did a play on Rome.

With EXCELS money and PTA money we had a writer Patricia Polaco present to our children. Very rich writing with family themes. Librarian spent time talking about her books. Showed her edited writing. How she got her ideas. She talked about being a child with learning disability; didn't read until she was 14. Talked about bullies coming after her, "Don't tease; don't bully."

Integration was the focus--to connect social studies and language arts and in some cases, science. I remember the unit on birds. Where people lived--

habitats--where birds lived. Brought in math, too. Migratory patterns--geography.

(Deliver) interdisciplinary subject keeping with grade-based subject. Have some cross-age curriculum. But most grade-based but still interdisciplinary.

Natives student wrote a narrative on food of different groups (and other comparison-contrast Native-American culture in Alaska). Have written a book which students read to the principal.

Used Venn Circles to organize data--critical thinking in putting data together that is related and is not related. Used in fifth grades. Categorized in groups of 4 or 5 students. Group discussed how information fit into the circles.

Language arts and social studies is a natural fit. First grade did post card advertisements for Alaska. Symbols on front and advertisement on the other side as a travel agent might do. Geography, art, and language.

In kinder, first, and second integration greatly successful. In these grade levels our school ordered all the supplemental levels when new social studies curriculum was adopted. Very easy to integrate language arts and social studies. Teachers in this are both phonics and whole language and one teacher is process oriented--critical thinking skills. He is a leader and because of EXCELS meetings influences other teachers.

4. Have EXCELS teachers decided on any outcome markers? If so, what are they and what do they tell you about the success of the program?

Once plan made, teachers need to have conversation with principal to make sure objectives are covered. EXCELS helped make overall plan. Buy own trade books and do your own thing not acceptable. Markers will be part of working together after faculty works things together. Looking at tests results and asking, "What do we need for kids to know if we know what we are doing in the classroom is working." Basis of all this is having conversations with one another. Stop isolation in classroom. Teachers have to want to change.

I want to sit down and talk with the teachers. This will be my question as a principal. The feedback I do have is a written report whenever teachers went out into the community.

What were the benefits there and how can we bridge that now in the Fall.

Teacher made pre and post social studies tests at grade level for school-wide goal. Trying to get our own information here.

Have not done EXCELS markers per se. Today working on writing rubric for all school.

Benchmarks only in writing. Talked about problem solving but hard to make a commonalty. Tried to make the scientific process across grades. Became repetitive and was unsuccessful. Have deep territorial boundaries here. Very, very hard to overcome. Staff knows benchmarks and expectations in various curriculum areas, but without specific direction and guidance, not something they have tackled on their own--exception was writing expectation. Last year establish grades expectation was the school goal--still not accomplished, e.g., express a complete thought. Can't repeat school goal over and over.

I don't think we have done anything about that at all.

Had new math Math Land last year and Everyday Math this year; we had benchmarks for this and spelling and technology benchmarks and writing rubric. Staff is doing this and oriented to benchmarks. Project idea is the outcome, e.g., fourth grade project on Egypt. Hard to write outcomes when don't know material. Don't know the social studies material in depth. We will make outcomes as familiarity with (landscape of material) is known.

Staff committed to multicultural concept and money helped get community involved with teachers and school.

I haven't sat in on meetings. Have heard topics but not markers.

5. What, in your opinion, is still needed to complete the implementation of the EXCELS curriculum goals?

Need to customize program to community: "What is important to the community?" EXCELS provides for this through writing about community and knowing community.

We need to talk about where have we been and where do we want to go. Is this a true support for the curriculum or should we use EXCELS as the curriculum.

As we go into the next year, the PTA will formulate a data base. This fits into EXCELS in local history and information and good community involvement and utilization of EXCELS program.

Trying to find time for more teaming. Like to get more people involved.

What is needed is more time. My frustration is we go with something and then it ends. That's one thing I enjoyed with this social studies curriculum.

It needs to be constant. More time for the teams to go on and more teacher training. Needs continual staff development. Not a quick little in service is needed. It can continue to grow and get better with teacher involvement.

Those who took the EXCELS class have moved far beyond the rest of the faculty. Before they took the class these teachers were the risk takers the shakers and movers. Now a divided staff--those who grow and those who won't go. How keep high achievers excited and the plodders encouraged. Creates significant divisions in schools' (faculties).

Collaboration and continued release time to observe one another's classes. Good things are happening in other classes. Seminars are valuable, too.

What is needed is better communication from central office. Administrators are coming in often late. We need more ownership. We are told it is something we have to do so we do the very best we can. The building principal and teachers can make it happen but we don't really don't know the larger picture. The funding for planning made it possible to integrate EXCELS into our curriculum. We have 2 thousand to spend. Teachers had plan in mind. Teachers were the link. If it is a program that will be around, we (principals) must be involved. Direct communication with central office and feeling that we are an integral part good, but hard to say how to do this. Principal has to make a commitment and district has to be more clear on general principals.

I would like to see the EXCELS grant next year and expand it beyond kinder, first, and second. I need to attend the meetings.

6. **If Anchorage School District had a chance to do something like EXCELS again, should the district do it? Should the district do it differently?**

Program almost in a competitive vain because priorities of new (everyday) math, new science, health review etc. Not enough time for everything. Overdose of new curriculum.

We need to talk about curriculum integration at the district level. Too much curriculum innovation coming in on us separate from one another. All things important. How do we get it done--integrated. Involve all the curricular levels. This is incredibly critical.

Those involved in it are proponents of EXCELS. We need to do a follow-up. Really need to bring the balance of the faculty along. We feel a bit fractured--too many balls in air trying to juggle.

Project like this means diving in. Write-ups and dialogue and follow-up. Need to ask "Now what?" Encourage others to come up with ideas and look for buy-in by teachers.

If I had wanted to contribute more direction in EXCELS, every opportunity was there. But we paddle hard to keep up in building. Time is the biggest problem. Follow-up with interview and with meeting with teachers is good.

Yes, we need to continue to be involved in this kind of program. We need district--time and commitment--what first, second, third grade need to be accomplished in the social studies. Right now district has small group principal meetings and we have focus groups. Very few meetings on curriculum. We don't really have time to knowing the (social studies) curriculum. As an example, to me, we just adopted a math series and we are not unified. How are we going to get to standardization. What do kids need to know.

Absolutely they should do it. I think I'm pretty happy in the way it was done. We very seldom have discussions as principals regarding curriculum. There is a real uneven communication.

The district should do it again. Any opportunity for teachers to improve helps students and that's why we are here. Math, reading, spelling are all present and important. Why would anyone want to pass an opportunity. Then again there might not be the (necessary) focus.

A mini-EXCELS for principals as an update for principals who need to be up to date on the classes the teachers were taking. The teachers would instruct the principal on a half day update.

It is a great bonus to have teachers have the time to see one another and talk to them. I'm hoping to continue that and have the time available. There's a lot happening in the district that demands teacher time--school board goals on spelling and reading. I'm afraid EXCELS might be something that will go away. Teachers are becoming overloaded.

Yes, we should do it again. Now that we know the landscape of new social studies curriculum and the techniques from EXCELS training, good if grant is extended to develop outcomes for grade levels.

In service at Bartlett with choices for teachers for different sessions--my teachers loved this. This format meant teachers learning with teachers. This was grant driven and we need more like this. This was innovative. If district did more of this on each curriculum area at district level it would be great. Having teacher presenters is good because gives teachers someone to call and network with. Becky and Doug presented at ASD leadership meetings for

principals and presented for school board, but principals did not get to share the Bartlett experience--perhaps next time we can choose sessions to attend, too (like the teachers did).

Yes. It is a great opportunity to involve community in your schools. The inquiry method of educating kids in social studies--way to go. Cathy Horney vicious circle--everything goes around in a wheel. EXCELS gives opportunity to teach inquiry--(afterall) it has always been there. I think if the school district is going to do a program like this again the district needs to be clear what program design is and what the outcomes are going to be instead of saying, "Well, you guys come up with something." and this is the personal feeling I got. We have all this money and we need to get (it) out to be inter culturally related, so do it. ASD needed more social studies staff to do a big program like this. It has been very successful for our staff though. Teachers had to do it and it has been good for our school.

I was not able to be involved in the grants. There is a whole vocabulary involved in the grants I am not familiar with. Meetings during the day need to be available to get principal involvement. After school meetings don't work. I don't have enough information. In some grants the principal has to be there--EXCELS I know was written by a teacher; I really wasn't involved. Doug might have a small group meeting for interested principal (but must be during the day).

APPENDIX G

EXCELS Teacher Interview Questions

Dr. Anne Kruse
May, 1997

1. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you do when you are teaching? Please give me two or three specific examples in Language Arts and Social Studies of things that you now do which you did not do prior to your EXCELS participation.

2. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Language Arts? Please give me two or three specific examples of things your students now do which they did not do prior to EXCELS.

3. How has your participation in EXCELS changed what you expect your students to do in Social Studies? Please give me two or three specific examples of things your students now do which they did not do prior to EXCELS.

4. How has the discussion of Standards in the EXCELS project changed your teaching:

5. Please describe your own personal and professional growth as a result of being involved in the EXCELS project.

6. What aspects of EXCELS supported you the most in your growth? The least?

7. What, if anything, have you done beyond the district-provided EXCELS training that you might not have done without your exposure to EXCELS?
   - read any specific books on pedagogy?
   - read any specific books on content?
   - gathered specific materials for instructional use?
   - participated in other courses or trainings?

8. On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being the highest , how would you rank your growth from your initial involvement with the EXCELS project until now?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

9. Do you think that it was worthwhile for the Anchorage School District to undertake a project like EXCELS? Why or why not?

APPENDIX H

Example #1

Grading Evaluation for Second Grade

Mike Mulligan and his Steam Shovel

1. **Name**_____
2. **Date**_____
3. **Did I illustrate beginning, middle, end?**
4. **Did I summarize beginning, middle, end?**
5. **Did I made a diorama?**_____
6. **I think my grade should be: N S- S+ O**

Example #2

Grading Matrices for Fifth Grade

Grading Evaluation

Each student has the ability to earn an "A" on this report. Hard work and attention to detail will pay off. The following is the grading scale. Please use this list to check off items as they are completed.

Format:

___Spelling	20 pts____
___Sentences	28 pts____
___Paragraphs	28 pts____
___Cover Page	5 pts____
___Bibliography	10 pts____

Body:

___Introduction	10 pts____
___Conclusion	10 pts____
___Habitat	10 pts____
___Life Cyc~e	10 pts____
___Food Chain	10 pts____
___Physical Characteristics	10 pts____
___Relationship with Man	10 pts____
___Picture Page	4 pts____
Total Points	155 pts_____

A 135-155 B = 114-134 C = 93-113 D = 72-92 F = Below 72

Person Report	Place Report	Animal Report
__Who They Are (Why important)	__Landscape/Landmarks	__What Does It Look Like
__Life Cycle	__Location	__Habitat
__Life Changing Event	__People	__Location in Food Chain
__Contributions to World	__Government/Laws	__Life Cycle
__Bibliography	__Weather	__Survival Techniques
	__Wildlife/Nature	__Species Family Group
	__Bibliography	__Bibliography

Notetaking for Research Report Grading Rubric

Student Name:_____Grade_____

6 Comprehensive notes taken for each main topic. Notes that are taken from a minimum of 2 sources. Left handed side is put into students' own words, not copied directly from any resource. Vocabulary section was used to the advantage of the student. A section for "miscellaneous" information was included for interesting facts that didn't fit in another area. Comments and/or questions written on the right hand side to direct further research or to connect to student's own life.

5 Comprehensive notes taken for each main topic. Notes that are taken from a minimum of 2 sources. Left handed side is put into students own words, not copied directly from any resource. Vocabulary section was used to the advantage of the student. A section for "Miscellaneous" information was included for interesting facts that didn't fit in another area. Comments/questions on the right band side of the notes was used in an incomplete or irrelevant way.

4 Comprehensive notes taken on all but 1 main topic. Notes that are taken from a minimum of 2 sources. Left handed side is put into students own words, not copied directly from any resource. Vocabulary" section was started, but not utilized completely. Comments/Questions on the right hand side of each page may not have been used at all.

3 Comprehensive notes were taken for at least half of the main topics. There is some reference to the books the student used for the research. The other main topics may have been started, but there may not be enough information to use for a complete paragraph on the topic. Left hand side may not all be in the students' own words, some of the sentences and/or ideas may have been copied directly from the resources. Vocabulary section was not used at all. Comments/questions on the right hand side of the page were not used at all.

2 Each main topic has some notes taken, but not enough to form complete ideas about that area. There is no reference to where the student got the information for the report. The notes may be comp)completely taken, word for word, from the resources used, and not put into the students' own words at all. Vocabulary section was note used, and neither was a miscellaneous section. No additional "Comments/questions" were added to the right side of the paper.

1 The main topics are listed in the appropriate note-taking fashion, however, notes were not taken for all topic areas. There is no vocabulary' list. There is no reference to the book titles they used to get the information from.

0 No effort made, beyond the labeling of the notes for that subject.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

NAME:_____ DATE_____

GRADING:

Each student has the ability to earn the following number of points per subject area. The possibility to earn less than that amount is also present. Before turning in a report make sure you have edited your paper to check for the quality in each of the following areas

Format:

Sentences	10 pts ____
Paragraphs	10 pts ____
Spelling	15 pts ____
Neatness	15 pts ____
Cover and Bibliography	10 pts ____
Oral Presentation	10 pts ____

Body:

Cultural Information	10 pts____
Research of country	15 pts____
Customs & Language	15 pts____
Foods of the country	5 pts____

Total Possible Points 115 pts____

Grading Scale

A 95-115
B 79-94
C 65 -78
D 64 or Below, must be rewritten until a passing grade is earned.

Teacher Grading Rubric **Name**_____

IDEAS & CONTENT
The paper makes a point or tells a story. 1 2 3 4 5

ORGANIZATION
The paper begins in a good spot. 1 2 3 4 5
The paper ends in a good spot. 1 2 3 4 5

Topic sentences for the paragraphs in the body of the paper. 1 2 3 4 5

Plenty of supporting detail sentences for the topic sentences 1 2 3 4 5

VOICE
The paper has character. 1 2 3 4 5

WORD CHOICE
Strong verbs (action words) were used. 1 2 3 4 5
Specific things you can picture were used. 1 2 3 4 5

SENTENCES
The sentences make sense. 1 2 3 4 5

AVERAGE

TOTAL

EDITING

Capitals were used:
-at the beginning of all sentences 1 2 3 4 5
-for names of people 1 2 3 4 5
-for names of places 1 2 3 4 5

Spelling is correct. 1 2 3 4 5
End punctuation is at the end of each sentence. 1 2 3 4 5

Commas were used:
-between lists of words 1 2 3 4 5
-to show short pauses inside a sentence 1 2 3 4 5

AVERAGE

Example #3

Third and Fourth Grade Evaluation Matrices

Independent Research Self Evaluation

Name_____Date_____

Parent_____Teacher_____

On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being least and 5 being most, rate yourself for the following:

1. timeuse: 1 2 3 4 5
2. planning: 1 2 3 4 5
3. preparation of materials: 1 2 3 4 5
4. enthusiasm: 1 2 3 4 5
5. self-motivation: 1 2 3 4 5
6. information gained about topic: 1 2 3 4 5
7. interview
8. bibliography
9. presentation
10. written report

11. Now use complete sentences to tell me about how you feel about yourself as a learner after having completed this research. What was challenging about this learning process?

12.Tell me what you would do differently - if anything to improve your presentation. If you wouldn't make changes, tell me why.

13. What are you interested in exploring for your next inquiry project?

Grade 3/4 Writing Rubric

CONTENT

Make connection between the spoken and written word
Uses writing for a variety of purposes
Multiple sentences related
Uses paragraph form
Can plan a story
Shows beginning, middle, and end
Tells enough - conveys complete idea
Develops characters
Writes appropriate titles
Voice is evident
Uses descriptive words
Uses different formats

Independently writes
Will edit and revise
Completes projects
Shares and reads aloud - one to one/whole family group
Chooses to write in free time
Consistency involved in writing process

MECHANICS

Can copy from the board and other sources
Uses phonetic spelling
Uses standard spelling
Cursive form correct - neat and easy to read
Correct margins - top, bottom, left, right
Paragraph indented
Uses correct punctuation - period, apostrophe, question mark exclamation point
syllabication, quotation marks

Uses capitals correctly
Uses complete sentence
Noun and verb agreement
Uses correct verb tense

__1st Quarter
__ 2nd Quarter
__3rd Quarter
__ 4th Quarter

MATH

Quarter_____

	Always	Sometimes	Never
Do I listen and follow directions?			
Do I ask questions if I don't understand?			
Do get started right away?			
Do I organize my math materials?			
Do I concentrate and work hard?			
Do build with manipulatives responsibly?			
Do! use manipulatives to help me understand?			
Do I finish my work?			

Evaluation Comments

Student_____Teacher_____

APPENDIX I

EXCELS! -- Evaluating Integrated Language Arts and Social Studies
The Jamestown Integrated Performance Assessment Unit

Ray Fenton, Tom Straugh, Fred Stofflet and Frank Shaffer[1]
Anchorage School District

Introduction

The EXCELS! project was initiated in 1994 through a grant from the United States Department of Education to demonstrate the development of a K-6 instructional program reflecting state and national standards in Civics, Geography, History, and English. The expectation was that student knowledge and skill would be enhanced through the infusion of reading, writing, speaking, and listening activities into social studies instruction.

More than 1,200 Anchorage teachers and librarians participated in EXCELS! training and curriculum development activities between 1995 and 1998. A core team of teachers was introduced to standards based instruction and curriculum development through innovative multi-discipline summer institutes. These teachers created school-based teams to diffuse what they learned through their in-service training and to support curriculum and lesson development in their individual schools.

Summer institute participants and selected teachers from participating schools were exposed to national leaders in the development of standards and curriculum. Educational leaders such as Christopher Salter, Cathy Salter, Miriam Chaplin, Elaine Reed, Beth Farnbach, Jack Hoar, Kathy Short, and Paul Gagnon contributed inspirational insights and connections with current national efforts to improve education. Local leaders such as Doug Phillips, Rebecca Sipe, Mary Bristol, and Barbara Bernard provided the project with day-to-day leadership and supported the development of curriculum and instructional materials. Ray Fenton directed the local evaluation effort with the assistance and support of the external program evaluator, Dr. Sandra Stotsky.

A multi-faceted assessment effort was undertaken under the direction of the Anchorage School District Assessment and Evaluation Department. The assessment focused on the impact of EXCELS! program on curriculum, knowledge of teachers, instruction provided to students, and student achievement. Teachers provided information on their training, experience, and changes in instruction. University of Alaska based researchers examined the impact on the Anchorage School District curriculum, school level

[1] The Jamestown Assessment Unit could not have been produced without the able assistance of Judy Ware, Joe Lisenby and Shana McPheters. This manuscript benefited from the review and comments of Dr. Steve Garrison of the Anchorage School District.

programs, and classrooms through a combination of focused interviews, site visits, and classroom observations. The Assessment and Evaluation Department tracked norm referenced test scores in reading, language arts, and social studies as well as developing a unique integrated assessment unit directly related to the goals and expectations for student gains in both language arts and social studies.

The overall evaluation results were good. Teachers gave positive reports of their experience and indicated that they were doing more to incorporate standards based instruction into their classrooms. University based observers and the program's external evaluator saw positive systemic changes when they visited schools, interviewed principals, and observed instruction. Norm referenced test results in reading, total language arts, and social studies showed gains across the Anchorage School District with the greatest gains in those schools which were early adopters of the EXCELS! project.

It was realized early in the project that an objective measure of student performance directly tied to standards and instruction would be needed to make a definitive statement about student learning. It was also hoped that a well made authentic assessment system could model the integration of instruction expected in the EXCELS! project and have a positive impact on classroom practice (Falk and Darling-Hammond, 1993). This paper reports on the development of the Jamestown Assessment Unit and the performance of students on this unique integrated grade four performance assessment.

The Birth of the Jamestown Assessment Unit

The difficulty of assessing student performance related to standards based expectations in reading, writing, speaking, and listening within the context of the social studies was recognized from the onset of the project. The direct assessment question from the federal grant which drove the development of the performance asked, "Did student products increasingly reflect the national standards and the content and performance skills in Civics, History, Geography, and Language Arts?"

During the summer of 1995 two groups of EXCELS! project participants met to identify the critical student skills in the language arts and social studies areas that related to national, state, and local standards. The social studies group developed a set of two dozen specific areas where students should be expected to develop skills in the social sciences. These ranged from map making and research skills through the ability to synthesize information, provide sound critical judgments, and prepare reasoned arguments based on observation and the application of theory. The language arts group adopted the Alaska State Language Arts Standards which call for A) speaking and writing well for a variety of purposes and audiences, B) being a competent and thoughtful reader, listener, and viewer, C) having the ability to identify and select from

multiple strategies to complete projects, D) thinking logically and reflectively to present and explain positions based on relevant and reliable information, and E) demonstrating the ability to understand and respect the perspectives of others (Alaska Department of Education, 1996). The student skills were formalized into a set of statements by Neil O'Leary of Dos Gatos Enterprises and presented to the EXCELS! Core Committee.

The EXCELS! Core Committee made up of Anchorage School District language arts and social studies curriculum coordinators, the EXCELS! project directors, and assessment and evaluation staff identified grade four as the target grade for an integrated assessment unit. A "skills matrix" was prepared to serve as the guide for the development of the performance assessment. The general direction given to the development team by the EXCELS! Core Committee was that the content of the assessment would be drawn from social studies and that the performances collected would be based on reading, writing, listening, and speaking.

The content of the fourth grade curriculum and curriculum materials was reviewed and a team of graduate students from the University of Alaska, Frank Shaffer and Anna Bonderinko. The specific social studies skills identified after an analysis of the K-4 curriculum were listening and note taking, map making, retrieval of information, description, analysis and synthesis of information, and the justification and explanation of conclusions based on social science theory.

The Assessment and Evaluation team then developed a number of scenarios around which an assessment unit might be developed. The areas consistent with the grade four curriculum were the early Native cultures of the Americas, the age of European exploration and explorers, contact between European and American Natives, and the early development of the Dutch, English, Spanish and Portuguese settlements in the Americas. A decision to place the assessment in the third or fourth quarter of the year further limited the content of the assessment to exploration, contact, and colonization.

The early settlement of Jamestown (1609) was selected as the content of the unit because of the availability of curriculum materials and consistency of the early settlement with curriculum goals. The Division of Historical Interpretation and Preservation at the Colonial National Historical Park provided bibliographical information and copies of interpretive materials including student and teacher materials for classroom enrichment, maps, and other images. The staff at Jamestown NPS Education Support took photographs of artifacts on display at the park and provided permission for the use of the images in the assessment. The Christian Science Monitor extended copyright permission to use text from a series of articles published on November 19, 1997 about Jamestown. The National Center for History in the Schools allowed the use of their background information for teachers

from a grade five unit on Jamestown which they have available as a demonstration of a standards based instructional unit (Pearson and Watkins, 1991). Additional information on the National Historical Park, Jamestown, and the settlement of Jamestown was gathered through the internet from the National Park Service and the Library of Congress.

Ray Fenton and the University of Alaska graduate student team visited fourth grade classrooms, observed language arts and social studies lessons, and discussed the potential characteristics of an instructional unit with teachers. Ray Fenton, Tom Straugh, and the graduate students then examined the literature on performance assessments in social studies and language arts. Judy Arter of the NWREL test center and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Assessment and Evaluation provided a number of examples of performance assessments. Some suggestions and models related to curriculum were provided by Gary Nash of the National Center for History in the Schools and the National Council on Economic Education. No assessment was found that would serve as a complete model for a standards based assessment which would directly reflect Anchorage School District, State of Alaska, and national standards.

After extended discussion of the design of the assessment unit between the EXCELS! Core Team and assessment staff, it was decided that the unit would consist of a number of lessons with imbedded assessments consistent with the social studies content following a model provided by Richard Shavelson for the development of science assessments (Shavelson, 1995). Student work would be collected in a student journal similar in form to a laboratory notebook. Assessment tasks were reviewed for their linkage to curriculum, focus, simplicity, and propriety (ASCD, 1995).

The completed assessment unit and supporting materials were prepared and submitted to the Anchorage School District for acceptance as supplemental instructional materials consistent with the approved district curriculum. Because the assessment is considered part of the regular district curriculum, teachers may use student scores on the assessment as basis for student grades.

Through two years of development more than seventy individuals contributed to the creation of the final Jamestown Assessment Unit. There were sixteen members on each of the Language Arts and Social Studies Objectives development teams that recommended the specific objectives to be assessed and the best way to measure student performance on those objectives. Five members served on the EXCELS! core team which provided oversight and final approval of the assessment. Seven individuals participated on the actual test development team. Fifteen teachers and more than four hundred students field tested elements of the assessment and scoring procedures. Fifteen teachers, assessment, curriculum, and university staff members participated on a field test review team and scoring group.

Three staff members worked as the primary production group in making Jamestown Assessment Unit Kits. Key members of the Assessment and Evaluation and EXCELS! Core Team were trained with the ASCD Assessing Student Performance Inquiry Kit (Arter, 1991).

The Jamestown Assessment Unit

Each teacher is provided with a Jamestown assessment unit kit. The kit includes the materials needed to support the assessment unit including:

- **Jamestown: The Beginning**. This is a colorful sixteen minute video on the founding and first years of colonial Jamestown told from the point of view of an early settler (Jamestown - Yorktown Historical Society, undated).
- Colonial Jamestown Integrated Assessment Unit: Teachers Guide. This forty-page publication includes background information on Jamestown, outlines of lessons, standard instructions for the data collection elements of lessons, and scoring rubrics and keys.
- Artifact kits including photographs from the Jamestown National Historical Park to be used with the small group activity.
- Jamestown Journals. Each student keeps a Journal during the Jamestown Unit which includes both instructional sections which match lessons and the selected response, short answer, and extended response items which are the basis of assessment and grading.

The final design of the Jamestown lessons is presented in the table below along with the materials provided and the standards addressed. There is no fixed length for any lesson through some of the assessment activities have specific directions which suggest time limits. Teachers are encouraged to extend and elaborate on lessons as much as they feel necessary. The actual teaching time of the lessons is from 30 minutes to 90 minutes depending on the activities. Some lessons may last more than one day. Teaching time in the pilot and first year assessment groups ranged from five to eight days. Some teachers developed additional lessons which included research on Jamestown, map skills (presented after the map skill assessment), use of the WWW for research on Jamestown and colonial America, and the more general history of Dutch, English, and Spanish settlement in the United States.

All grade four teachers know that they may be selected to offer the Jamestown Assessment Unit as part of the District-wide Anchorage Assessment Program. Specific teachers are randomly selected for the annual district assessment. Teachers are warned at least six weeks in advance that they have been selected to give the assessment during the fourth quarter of the year. Teachers who are selected are offered a half day of substitute teacher assistance to complete the paperwork related to the unit and the opportunity to participate in the

District-wide scoring of performance assessments during the following summer. Teachers are expected to grade the work of each student using the rubrics provided in the teacher's guide which accompanies the unit.

Description of the Jamestown Assessment Unit

Lesson	Teacher's Materials	Assessment
Lesson 1 Introduction to Colonial Jamestown Goals: -Introduction to Vocabulary -Introduction to location and goals of the Jamestown colony -Building interest in Jamestown -Linking with prior lessons on exploration and contact	Lecture Video	No Assessment
Lesson 2 A letter to Martha -Introduction to a child's life in early colonial America -Learning the physical location and principal occupations of Jamestown	Text material Poster/Map Discussion Guide	Jamestown Journal -List of significant details from listening assignment. -Map of Jamestown
Lesson 3 The New World News -Learning about the Virginia Company -Exploring the reasons that Europeans came to colonize North America -Examining the economics of early colonies -Examining the relations between Native Americans and colonists	Text materials - newspaper Discussion Guide Enrichment Materials	Jamestown Journal -Selected response reading comprehension - Constructed response synthesis and interpretation of reading.

Description of the Jamestown Assessment Unit (continued)

Lesson	Teacher's Materials	Assessment
Lesson 4 American Anthropologist -Introduction to Anthropology -Classification, examination, and reasoning about artifacts -Activities of colonial Jamestown.	Text materials Group Activity Kits Student response sheets Discussion Guide Poster Constructed Response Assessment Rubrics	Jamestown Journal - Group participation rating - Constructed response synthesis and interpretation.
Lesson 5 A Gift for Virginia	Text Materials Discussion Guide Editing Activity Guide Writing Assessment Rubrics	Jamestown Journal -Writing Activities Checklist -Editing Process Assessment -Trait based writing assessment

The Quality of the Jamestown Assessment Unit as Curriculum

The resources and extensive participation of curriculum experts and classroom teachers in the three year development cycle assured that the unit and lessons would have a user friendly teacher's guide and lessons that worked well with classroom groups of students. The quality was reflected in a number of formal and informal assessments of unit content.

- Reviews by Anchorage School District Reading, Language Arts, and Social Studies Curriculum Coordinators was positive.
- Reviews by Anchorage School District Curriculum Committees was positive and the unit and unit resources became part of the ASD approved supplemental curriculum materials.
- Reviews by Pilot Test teachers (14) were generally positive and, after minor revisions, the reviews by randomly selected classroom teachers (22) who taught the unit were positive.
- Review by scorers trained to use holistic and trait based rubrics for the independent scoring of student work indicated that students were responsive to the assignments given and that the work was scorable though minor revisions were required to the rubrics and work samples developed based on the trials with volunteer pilot group classes.

- Reviews by local university evaluators who are expert in Reading, Writing, and Social Studies instruction were positive.
- Review by the EXCELS! outside evaluator, Dr. Sandra Stotskey, was positive.

The Quality of the Jamestown Assessment Unit as Student Assessment

Assessment is the collection of information to be used in coming to understand and judge individuals, programs, and processes. The specific purposes of the Jamestown Unit were to report on the success of the EXCELS! project in improving the performance of students on skills called for in national, state, and local standards.

The validity of the assessment may be examined from three points of view. Because the assessment unit was accepted as part of the curriculum it is *ipso facto* an authentic assessment. The authenticity, however, goes beyond the content of the assessment to the activities that are entailed in the standard assessment pieces: listening and recording important facts, making a map which has acceptable form and includes the key features of Jamestown, reading multiple texts and demonstrating both specific recall of critical facts and the ability to make inferences and draw conclusions, performing well in a group working to solve an anthropological problem, developing a rational answer and justifying it, and writing a description and justification of an item which would transform and improve the lives of Jamestown residents of 1623. These activities are in and of themselves authentic classroom work and send the message to teachers and students that classroom work is important (See McTighe, 1996). Finally, the testimony of the various reviewers of the unit as quality instruction supports the link between the assessment activities and instruction.

An external indicator of the validity of the assessment is the relation of the scores on the Jamestown assessment to an independent measure of student performance on measures related to the same skills. Most of the students who participated in the Jamestown Assessment Unit classes were also tested with the California Achievement Test Survey Battery as part of the Alaska Statewide Student Assessment. Not all students were tested because of the normal turnover in students and Alaska Statewide Student Assessment regulations which allow the exclusion of some special education and bilingual students from testing.

The total number of students active in participating classes in the spring of 1997 was 412, including all bilingual and special education students. It was expected that the assessment would be given to bilingual and special education students with whatever accommodations were common in the classroom. One of the strengths of performance assessment units like

Jamestown is that it provides all students a chance to participate and can help support inclusion and equity in the classroom (Darling-Hammond, 1991).

The number of scorable responses on returned Jamestown Journals ranged from a low of 285 for the constructed response to reading following the New World News articles to 360 who answered at least one of the reading multiple choice items. Three hundred and sixty-eight of the 412 students, 89%, had at least one norm referenced test score. Table 1 shows the correlation of CAT 5 scores to the various included performance assessments based on the scoring of Jamestown Journals by trained raters.

The sampled classes were similar to the Anchorage School District as a whole. The average performances of the 368 students in the sample classes with test scores were compared to Anchorage School District averages on Reading, Total Language, Total Battery, and Social Studies the averages were not significantly different. The averages were, however, different among participating classrooms reflecting the diversity of the schools represented in Anchorage. Approximately 60% of the students where white, 10% were Alaska Native, 10% were Black and the remaining 20% were Pacific Islanders, Asian, and Hispanic. Forty-seven percent of the group were male. Twenty-seven percent qualified for free or reduced price lunches. Eight percent were participating in the special education program. Eight percent were participating in the bilingual program. Five students were getting help from migrant education program tutors. Class sizes ranged from 22 to 31 students with an average of 27.

All statistical analysis took place using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences running on a VAX computer system. (SPSS, 1988). The data set is and a copy of the complete statistical analysis results are available on request from the authors.

When the correlations among the total scores for the various lessons are compared, they are also shown to be significantly associated though the degrees of association reflects notable differences. Lesson 2 (Listening and Map Making) scores correlate with lessons three, four and five .33*[2], .27*, .23*. Lesson 3 (Reading) scores correlate with lesson two, four, and five .33*, .17*, and .33*. Lesson 4 (Classification and Group Work) scores correlate with lessons two, three, and five .27*, .17* and .05. Lesson 4 (Writing) scores correlate with lessons two .23*, .33*, and .05. The individual lesson scores correlate with the overall total score .52*, .61*, .30*, and .85*.

[2] * is used throughout the paper to indicate that a result was found to be statistically significant with a probability level of .05 or lower.

Table 1
Correlation of Jamestown Journal and CAT 5 Scores

Jamestown Assessment	Average Score	Reading	Total Language	Total Battery	Social Studies
Total	2.66	.32*	.39*	.39*	.34*
Listening	2.48	.32*	.37*	.42*	.36*
Map	2.55	.28*	.32*	.38*	.23*
Reading -Multiple C.	3.04	.12*	.17*	.15*	.13*
Reading - Short Rsp	1.78	.15*	.29*	.29*	.31*
Catalogue Entry	3.56	.23*	.19*	.23*	.23*
Group Activity	2.68	.19*	.22*	.23*	.23*
Writing Ideas	2.87	.34*	.40*	.41*	.36*
Writing Conventions	2.85	.45*	.47*	.49*	.43*

While the correlations between the selected response norm referenced test and the performance assessment are not substantial, they are notable and statistically significant. While there was no specific expectation for agreement set prior to the development of the performance assessment and there was an expectation the differences would be notable, there was a hope that the correlations between the CAT Reading and Jamestown reading and CAT Total Language and the Jamestown writing assessment would be stronger than the correlations which were found.

The examination of the test-retest correlation of the CAT scores themselves were not much above .7 when the spring, 1996 and spring, 1997 CAT scores were examined for this group of students. The test-retest scores correlated .65* for Reading, .75* for Total Language, and .69* for Social Studies. The Total Battery test-retest correlation was .84*. About 300 of the 1997 students had scores for both 1996 and 1997.

Another question which arises with performance assessments is the consistency of scoring. The Jamestown Assessments were scored twice. The first scoring was done by the classroom teachers using the scales and score

point descriptions generated from the experience of the pilot trials. The second scoring was done by a group of trained raters who examined samples of the papers generated in 1997, selected samples of papers which they felt represented score points, modified the rubrics slightly based on the examination of the papers and discussion, and scored after demonstrating agreement in the rating of the sample exemplar papers. Rubrics were based on the Ideas and Content and Conventions rubrics developed by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory working with the Beaverton and Portland, OR school districts (Spandel and Culham, 1991). The trained raters were able to demonstrate at least 70% agreement in scoring papers.

Because of the process used to generate the expert scores, the agreement between teacher-raters and trained raters is examined as correlations rather than the number of absolute agreements.

Ratings by Teachers and Raters
Averages and Correlations

Area	Teacher Average	Trained Rater Average	Correlation
Total	34.59	33.09**	.86**
Listening	2.70	2.46**	.55**
Map	2.73	2,61*	.54**
Reading -Multiple C.	3.09	3.06	.95**
Reading - Short Rsp	2.33	1.84**	.57**
Catalogue Entry	4.12	3.58**	.27**
Group Activity	2.98	2.71**	.45**
Writing Ideas	2.86	2.90	.68*
Writing Conventions	2.89	2.86	.76*

***,** Represent significance less than or equal to .05 or .01 respectively. Means differences are based on t-test for paired samples and correlations are Pearson - r.**

All scoring guides are based on a 1 - 5 scale. The rubrics or scoring guides are adapted to the task and the social studies content of the artifact which is being scored. In general, a score of 1 represents a response which is "developing" or "beginning." A score of 1 is an active effort to respond to the assignment but may have little quality. A score of 3 is basic or a minimal demonstration that the standard has been fulfilled. A score of 3 represents an understanding of

the assignment and a performance which may have minor flaws and awkward constructions. A score of 5 represents advanced performance. Any flaws are so minor that they are easily passed over and the performance shows mastery of the content and skills covered in the assignment (Anchorage School District, 1995).

The average scores for the individual assessments are for the most part close to the score of 3. The short written response to reading which required the synthesis of ideas drawn from a series of articles was difficult. In most of the areas that did not require an assessment of writing, teachers gave higher scores than the trained raters. This was most notable on the catalogue entry which was a part of the "American Anthropologist" lesson. It may be that the completion of the lesson influenced the score for teachers while the trained raters only considered the quality of the entry and had the benefit of a set of exemplar papers to using. The correlation of catalogue entry scores was only .27.

However, the overall agreement of scores represented in the Total of individual assessments was .86 which reflects a substantial agreement between teachers and trained raters as to the overall quality of student performance. When this is contrasted with the correlation of the total score from the combination of the total score on the Jamestown performance assessment with the CAT/5 Total Battery score, .49*; Reading, .32*; Total Language, .40*; or Social Studies, .35*; it is fairly clear that what is being measured can be fairly consistently scored by teachers and trained raters while it is quite different from what is being measured by the selected response tests.

What does student performance on the Jamestown Assessment Unit mean for the EXCELS! program evaluation?

The goal is, of course to have all students performing at or above expectation which means having a score of 3, 4, or 5 on the various performance scales. There were two expectation set by the EXCELS! program: 1) that 70% of all students would meet or exceed district expectations and 2) student performance would improve. The table below examines the student performance in terms of program expectations.

The table shows the results from a trial of the 1995-1996 prototype Jamestown Assessment unit. Elements of the assessment were tested and scored on a trial basis for listening, 273 students; map making, 80 students; reading, 106 students, and writing, 50 students. The initial trial took place with volunteer teachers who were active participants in the EXCELS! project.

The 1996-1997 results are based on a random sample of intact grade 4 classroom groups. There was a potential of about 368 student participants

206

though not all students had provided scorable samples of work in all areas. The total included in each or the areas is listening, 314; map making, 328; reading, 328; group processes, 326; and writing 328. Students were some times excluded from parts of the assessment because they were special education or bilingual students but most of the missing scores were due to students who were absent on the day of a specific element. Average absences run between 5% and 8% of the student group. There was also one class excluded from the listening exercise because the teacher reported that she had not followed the directions provided with the lesson.

Percentage of Students Reaching Performance Goals
Jamestown Assessment Unit
1995-96 and 1996-97

Area	Selected Sample 1995-1996	Random Sample 1996-1997	Acceptable Performance
Listening	70%	49%	No
Map	85%	60%	No
Reading -Multiple Choice	82%	73%	Yes
Reading Written Response		24%	No
Catalogue Entry		86%	Yes
Writing Ideas	74%	64%	Yes/No
Writing Conventions	50%	61%	No

During these same two years, the norm referenced test scores in the areas of Reading, Total Language Arts, stayed the same or improved for fourth grade students. Reading scores were at the 64th percentile for both years. Total Language scores improved from the 56th to the 63rd percentile. The Total Battery score improved from the 63rd to the 66th percentile. Social Studies improved from the 57th to the 61st percentile.

When students with continuing enrollment with Anchorage School District were tested at the end of grade three and the end of grade 4 were compared there were also improvements. Reading improved from the 65th to the 66th

percentile. Total language arts improved from the 53rd to the 64th percentile. Social studies improved from the 58th to the 61st percentile. With over 2,800 students tested each year, all of the differences are statistically significant.

The Jamestown Assessment Unit and Cat Reading, Language Arts, and Social Studies scores suggest that students are making progress toward meeting Anchorage School District, state, and national goals for improved knowledge and skills. The Jamestown Assessment goes beyond the positive results of the standardized norm referenced tests to look at specific performance on skills and knowledge linked to the Anchorage curriculum. Taken together, the assessments are strong evidence of the success of the EXCELS! project.

Impact of the Assessment

The reaction of teachers to the Jamestown Assessment Unit was interesting. University observers, the programs's outside evaluator, and the Assessment and Evaluation team that created the Jamestown Assessment Unit visited classrooms and talked to teachers about the unit. There was also a brief survey with open-ended questions given to teachers along the assessment unit.

Nearly all of the teachers indicated that they enjoyed teaching Jamestown. They found that the materials were of high quality and that the assessments provided information that they could use on student performance. Some teachers extended the unit to include a lesson on map making after the map assessment and indicated that they were making modifications in their teaching to place more emphasis on listening and note taking. Some liked the editing process and editing check list included in the assignment and indicated that they would incorporate a similar peer editing and checklist activity into their teaching of writing. One teacher noted that it was the first time that he had curriculum materials which encouraged student research using the world wide web and found that his fourth grade students enjoyed using the Internet to gather information. It was evident that a number of teachers changed their instruction based on their experience with the Jamestown Assessment Unit.

It is clear that the Jamestown Assessment Unit in and of itself is a positive product of the EXCELS! project. It provides teachers with a model of a strong set of lessons based on an integration of social studies and language arts as well as effective student assessment. It also fulfills the goal of performance assessment that Khattri and all call "a seamless web that promotes teacher/student collaboration, active learning, critical thinking skills, and multi-disciplinary understanding." (Khattri, Kane and Reeve, 1995).

Conclusion

The production of the integrated Jamestown Assessment Unit was a successful part of EXCELS!. It demonstrates that student work generated as part of instruction may be used for a standardized assessment of student and program performance relative to local, state, and national standards.

The Jamestown Unit is an operational definition of an authentic assessment. The students learn and improve social studies and language arts skills through participation in the assessment unit. Teachers take an active part in the scoring of the assessments and have the option of grading their students relative to standards based expectations. Teachers also get feedback from trained scorers which allows them to consider their own grading and expectations for students. Curriculum developers and district administrators can see how students perform relative to model performances with known quality.

Analysis of the Jamestown Unit shows that performance assessment is scorable by both trained raters and teachers. The fairly similar scores and high overall correlation of total scores suggests that the unit may have achieved the goal of its developers to have a standardized assessment which could be fair as a basis for student grades.

While correlations with the Social Studies, Reading, and Language Arts sections of the CAT/5 survey battery are lower than expected by the authors, the correlations do show a strong significant relation. Based on reviews for validity of content and authenticity of performances by teachers, curriculum developers, and outside experts; our conclusion is that the Jamestown Assessment Unit measures somewhat different skills that are at least as well linked to standards as the norm referenced test questions.

Finally, a question of values.

The premise of the EXCELS! program was that integration of Language Arts and Social Studies instruction would enhance both curriculum areas. On the language arts side, students would become better communicators for their teachers would be self-conscious in providing experiences with reading, writing, speaking, and listening during social studies instruction. On the other social studies side, the integration of language arts activities into social studies content would give more time for social studies instruction and more emphasis on achieving the national, state, and local goals in civics, geography, history, and economics.

If you believe that teaching and learning is a self-conscious cycle of assessment, activity, and re-assessment of the knowledge and skills important to judging student success and adapting instruction; the Jamestown Unit may

have an importance beyond the EXCELS! project. It demonstrates that good curriculum and good assessment may be linked to curriculum through a set of authentic classroom instructional activities which provide for both learning and the creation of artifacts which may be used to judge student and program success. (See McTighe, 1996 and Wiggins, 1966).

The Jamestown Assessment Unit encourages good teaching and models good classroom assessment. It may be what we should expect to happen as we move forward into an era of standards driven instruction and assessment.

References

Alaska Department of Education. (June, 1996). Alaska Standards: Content Standards for Alaska Students. Juneau, AK: Alaska Department of Education.

Anchorage School District (1995) Jameston Integrated Assessment Unit Teacher's Guide. Anchorage, AK: Assessment and Evaluation Department, Anchorage School District.

Arter, J. (1991) Assessing Student Performance. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development Inquiry Kit. Arlington, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

ASCD. (1991). Designing Performance Assessment Tasks. Education Update Newsletter, 37 6, 1, 4-5, 8. Arlington, VA: The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development.

Colonial National Historical Park (1995, August, 8). Classroom Enrichment at Jamestown and Yorktown. Yorktown, VA, Colonial National Historical Park.

Conover, K.A. (1996, November 19). Weekdays, She's in fifth Grade: Weekends, She's in 1627. The Christian Science Monitor, pp. 16, 17.

Falk, B and Darling-Hammond, L. (1993, March). The Primary Learning Record at P.S. 261: How Assessment Transforms Teaching and Learning." New York, NY: National Center for Restructuring Education, Schools and Teaching.

Fenton, R., Straugh, T., Ware, J, and. McPheters, S., and Stofflet, F. (1996). Anchorage School District Profile of Performance: 1997-98. Anchorage, AK: Anchorage School District, Assessment and Evaluation Department.

Fenton, R., Straugh, T., Garrison, S., Ware, J. McPheters, S., and Stofflet, F. (1997). Anchorage School District Profile of Performance: 1997-98. Anchorage, AK: Anchorage School District, Assessment and Evaluation Department.

James, S. (1996, November 19). A Visitor to Early Plymouth. The Christian Science Monitor, pp. 16, 17.

Jamestown-Yorktown Historical Society and Virginia Department of Education (Producer) ,Skinner, E. (Director). (Undated). Jamestown: The Beginning [Video]. (Available from Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, PO Box 1607, Williamsburg, VA 23187-3630.

Khattri, N, Kane, M. and Reeve, A. (1995). Research Report: How Performance Assessments Affect Teaching and Learning. Educational Leadership, 53 3, 80-83.

Koretz, D., Stecher, B., Klein, D., McCaffrey, D. and Diebert, D. (1993, December). Can Portfolios Assess Student Performance and Influence Instruction? The 1991-1992 Vermont Experience. CSE Technical Report 371. Los Angeles, CA: CRESST.

McTighe, J. (1966, December). What Happens Between Assessments? Educational Leadership, 54, 6-12.

National Park Service (Undated). Jamestown, Where a Nation Began. Richmond, VA, Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities.

Spandel, V and Culham, R. (1991). The Student Friendly Guide to Writing with Traits. Portland, OR: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory.

Pearson, J. and Watkins, B. (1991). Early Jamestown: A Unit of Study for Grades 5-8. Los Angeles, CA, National Center for History in the Schools, University of California, Los Angeles.

Shavelson, R. (1995, June 2). Notebook: Development of Performance Assessments in Science - A Workshop Designed for the Earth Systems Implementation Program, Anchorage School District. Palo Alto, CA, Stanford University.

Sparks, M. (1996, November 19). Unravel These 17th-Century Riddles from the Book of Merry Riddles. The Christian Science Monitor, pp. 16, 17.

SPSS Inc, (1988). SPSS-X User's Guide. Chicago, IL, SPSS Inc.

Thomas, O. (1996, November 19). What did Pilgrim Children Do Without Videos. The Christian Science Monitor, pp. 16, 17.

Wiggins, G. (1966). Practicing What We Preach in Designing Authentic Assessments, Educational Leadership, 54, 18-25.

APPENDIX J

Colonial Jamestown

Integrated Assessment Unit

Teacher's Guide

Spring 1998

Development of the Colonial Jamestown Assessment Unit was supported in part by a grant from the United States Department of Education.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks to all those who have helped in the design and creation of the Jamestown Unit.

- Language Arts objectives development team:
  - Ray Fenton
  - Jan Flanders
  - Amy Goodman
  - Shannon Harbke
  - Ellen Kennedy
  - Harry Matrone
  - Jenine Mayer
  - Neil O'Leary
  - Becky Sipe
  - Marsha VanAbel
  - Jacquie Whitmore
  - Kathy Wilson
  - Glenn Wright

- Social Studies objectives development team:
  - Jackie Dexheimer
  - Mary Hayes
  - Karen Waggoner
  - Linda VanGoor
  - Bonnie Graham
  - Cindy Forsyth
  - Janet Craig
  - Cindy Martindale
  - Jeanne Bradner
  - Margaret Tovrea
  - Marcia Indahl
  - Sallye Werner
  - Julie Maker
  - Tom Straugh
  - Doug Phillips
  - Frank A. Shaffer

- Excels core team:
  - Project Director, Fred Stofflet
  - Barbara Bernard
  - Mary Bristol
  - Doug Phillips
  - Becky Sipes

- Development team:
  - Anna Bondarenko
  - Ray Fenton
  - Mardell Kiesel
  - Shanna McPheters
  - Frank A. Shaffer
  - Tom Straugh
  - Judy Ware

- Field Test team:
  - Aileen Bentson
  - Florence Daniel
  - Steve Grabowski
  - Ed Graff
  - Cheryl Hilmes
  - Linda Julliard
  - Dolores Kairaiuak
  - Suzannne Lange
  - Janice Littlebear
  - Peg Malone
  - Ann Tew
  - Steve Toth
  - Bob Warren

- Field Test review team:
  - Steve Beardsley
  - Ray Fenton
  - Steve Grabowski
  - Dolores Kairaiuak
  - Patricia Kennedy
  - Mardell Kiesel
  - Suzanne Lange
  - Neil O'Leary
  - Frank A. Shaffer
  - Tom Straugh
  - Linda Van Goor

- Production:
  - Neil O'Leary of Dos Gatos Enterprises
  - Joe Lisenby, Public Affairs Department
  - Judy Ware, Assessment and Evaluation

Substantial financial support for this project was provided by the United States Department of Education's Anchorage-based project to integrate Language Arts and Social Studies instruction.

INTEGRATED
LANGUAGE ARTS AND
SOCIAL STUDIES ASSESSMENT

The Jamestown unit is based on a combination of language arts and social studies goals and student performance expectations. Some of the skills assessed will have been mastered prior to fourth grade. Some are based directly on the instruction expected to take place during fourth grade.

Language Arts activities serve as the backbone of the assessment. The District expectation is that all students will improve in reading, writing, speaking, and listening skills as they progress in age, ability, and exposure to instruction. Social studies skills are more grade-specific and include in the early years becoming familiar with the concept of community, developing map skills, and learning about European voyages of discovery and colonization of the new world.

The Jamestown assessment unit is developed to be consistent with the end of the third quarter and the fourth quarter of grade four. By this time, students should have completed their activities related to the great voyages of discovery and should be ready to start thinking about colonization and the effect of colonization on the Americas. The Jamestown assessment unit was developed with the help of the United States Department of the Interior National Park Service Colonial National Historical Park at Yorktown, Virginia. Some text and quotations are drawn from a Jamestown unit developed by National Center for History in the Schools, Los Angeles, California.

The assessment unit is not a timed test. The intention is to provide students with all the time they need for their group work and the completion of exercises. Individual lessons are expected to take up to two hours. The writing assessment includes an opportunity for peer revision and takes place over two or three days. The actual time spent on each lesson and the schedule are up to you. While the evaluation activities require standard directions, you should feel free to supplement the content and be creative in the presentation.

The assessment unit is presented as a series of activities and lessons which will provide students with information about early English colonization in the United States. Each activity includes both language arts and social studies elements. Students will have the opportunity to demonstrate what they know and what they are able to do in each of the areas displayed in the following table.

The Make Up of the Assessment

Lesson	Assessment
Colonial Jamestown	No Assessment
Letter To Martha	Listening Map Making
New World News	Reading Response
American Archaeologist	Classification Group Cooperation
A Gift for Virginia	Writing Process

Unlike standardized tests which are given and sent away to be scored, you are expected to play an active part in the scoring process. Scoring guides are provided after each lesson description. You are asked to rate your students on the same scales which will be used by other teachers who will use the rubrics included in the packet to assess student products. Assessment is done in much the same way that we have done it over the years through the Anchorage Writing Project and the Alaska Statewide Voluntary Writing Assessment.

Take some time to examine these lessons and decide how the directions may be best presented to your class. It is important that the major elements specified in the directions and prompts be followed. It is fair for you to supplement and elaborate as long as you do not guide the specific responses of students on the assessment activities. For the assessment to be valid, students must understand the tasks they are given and have the time they need to do a good job.

In preparing to present the assessment, note that these materials go beyond the discussion of Jamestown in the student textbook. Supplementary materials, beginning on page 27 of this manual, can be used for enrichment.

Lesson One

Colonial Jamestown

Today students are introduced to the *Jamestown Journal*, and have the opportunity to view and discuss a videotape, *Jamestown: The Beginning*. They also learn some basic information about the Jamestown Colony through the reading of an introductory essay.

The entire lesson should take less than 45 minutes to complete. The length of the videotape is 17 minutes.

Assessment Elements

There are no assessment activities in this lesson.

Required Materials

- *Jamestown Journal* for each student
- *Jamestown: The Beginning* videotape

Procedures

1. Give each student a copy of the *Jamestown Journal*.

   - Students should fill out the information block on the front cover of the *Jamestown Journal*. This should include name, school, grade, teacher, and month.

   - To introduce the activity, have the student open to **page 1** of their booklet. Students should read along silently as you read *Colonial Jamestown* (page 7 in *Teacher's Guide*) aloud.

   - If you have a classroom map of the United States, you may wish to show students the location of Jamestown and describe the route that ships might have taken from England to reach the Americas, the location of the James River and the location of Jamestown in Virginia.

2. Present the videotape, *Jamestown: The Beginning*, to the class.

   - Introduce the videotape to the class as an overview of the first years of the Jamestown settlement. You may want to prepare students for viewing the videotape by providing specific things to look for or questions to be discussed.

   - After the videotape has been completed, you may wish to help students make connections between earlier discussions of contact between Europeans and indigenous peoples and the experiences of the early Jamestown settlers.

3. Upon completion of the Lesson, collect the *Jamestown Journals*.

Ending Lesson One

The next lesson will include two major assessment activities. Students will be asked to complete a listening activity and draw a map of Jamestown. You may wish to let students know that they will have the opportunity to listen to a letter from a young Jamestown girl to one of their friends in England. They may wish to think about the kinds of things that they might say if they were children in Jamestown and were sending a letter to a friend.

Lesson Two

Map of Jamestown
1619

In this lesson, students have the opportunity to listen to a letter from a young Jamestown girl to a friend in England. After listening to the letter and noting down significant geographical features of Jamestown, students are asked to draw a map of Jamestown using information they have acquired through the listening activity and the videotape.

The students need to be instructed to listen closely and write brief notes on **page 4** in the *Jamestown Journal* to help them make a map of the Jamestown Colony. At the end of the oral reading portion, the students create a map of Jamestown from the description presented in the letter.

Assessment Elements

NOTE: **Do not teach or review map making skills prior to the student map exercise.** If you feel that the students need additional instruction in map making skills, feel free to insert a short lesson or discussion after they have completed their maps.

- The student, while listening to *A Letter To Martha*, will be able to list, on **page 4** form provided, facts presented in the reading to help draw the map. Tell them specifically to listen for and write down items which will help them draw their map.

- Upon the completion of the listening activity, the students will be able to demonstrate their ability to transfer acquired prior knowledge and factual information received in this presentation by creating a map of Jamestown Colony as it appeared in approximately 1619.

Required Materials

- *Jamestown Journal* for each student
- Day One Reading (*A Letter to Martha* found on **page** 8 in *Teachers Guide*)
- Supplies: pencil, paper, crayons, etc.

Procedures:

1. Each student starts the lesson with their copy of the *Jamestown Journal*.

2. **You should introduce the activity to the students without making any reference to testing as a part of this week's activities.** It is suggested that you tie the Jamestown unit to material that has been covered previously in class. Much of what we know about colonial America comes from documents such as those included in the *Voices from the Past* section of the students' *Jamestown Journal*

(**page** 3). *A Letter to Martha* is an attempt to capture the spirit of the colony through a letter which might have been written at the time.

Feel free to reinforce the concepts in the Introduction and *A Letter to Martha* by including any vocabulary which you feel might be new or difficult for your students. It might be a good time to connect with earlier lessons on exploration and how the English, Dutch, and Spanish incursions resulted in settlements in different parts of the Americas.

3. Tell students to take notes on the *A Letter to Martha* on **page 4** of the *Jamestown Journal*. Students should write one feature of Jamestown on each line. Have students open their books to **page 4** and read the directions prior to your reading the letter to the class. **It is important that students know that they will be expected to draw a map of Jamestown.**

4. Read *A Letter to Martha*, aloud to the entire class. While reading you can stop and ask opened-ended questions just as you might in any other lesson. You need to remember that students are being assessed on how well they make decisions about what to write down. You should not prompt them as to which facts are most important. Do not read the letter twice, or repeat sections of it.

5. When you finish reading *A Letter to Martha*, ask the class to turn to **page 5** of the *Jamestown Journal*. Read through the directions with the students and suggest that students take out any materials they need for making a map of Jamestown. Ask students to use their notes to help them make accurate maps. Students should do their own work.

6. Upon the completion of the map, collect *Jamestown Journals*.

Ending Lesson One

When all students have created a map of Jamestown, ask the students to name an item included in their map. Make a list of the items on the board. When the list is completed place stars beside the ones that came directly from the reading (e.g. fence around Jamestown). If time permits, create the map of Jamestown on the board by having students identify items that should be included. The result should be a map and a list of items, which can be used to review map making skills.

Elements that should be included in the map are part of the scoring guide on **page** 10 of this manual.

The next lesson is based on the students reading of a broadside which might have been prepared by the Virginia Company to entice settlers to the new colony. You might want to set up the students for the lesson by asking them about "infomercials" and persuasive messages that might be presented to seem like objective reporting. Considering the purpose of messages will help students to have a context for responding to the open-ended question following the New World News.

Colonial Jamestown

When English colonists first came to Jamestown, the only residents of that part of what we now call "The United States" were Native Americans. For thousands of years Native Americans were the only people to live in the part of the United States now called Virginia. In studying history we have learned that different European explorers attempted to establish colonies in North America. The Dutch came to New York. The Spanish came to Florida, Texas, California, and the Southwest. The French came to Canada and the Midwest. The English came to the East coast.

The first successful English-speaking settlement was at Jamestown. It was located in what is now the state of Virginia on the north bank of the James River. Jamestown opened the East coast of North America to England and supported the European exploration of North America.

The town of Jamestown was established in 1607 by Englishmen who came to the New World in search of wealth. They came aboard three ships: the Susan Constant, the Godspeed, and the Discovery. Among these men was John Smith who helped to establish Jamestown.

Most of the men who came with Smith to America were not very well prepared for the hardship of building a colony in the wilderness. During the first year at Jamestown, more than half of the men died of starvation. The men did not know how to hunt or fish well enough to meet their needs, even though the forest and river were full of wildlife to harvest. If it had not been for the help of the Native Americans and John Smith's ability as a good leader, no one would have survived the winter.

One of John Smith's first instructions was to build a permanent structure, or outpost. This would serve as a trading post and fort to protect the settlers from unfriendly people. The fort was made from upright logs and shaped like a triangle. In each corner was a cannon taken from the ships. The new residents all lived inside the fort in crude houses.

Over the next few years more and more people moved to Jamestown. This was due in part to John Rolfe's discovering that tobacco grew well in the area. Tobacco quickly became very popular in England. Farming became an important activity. The colony quickly grew and many farms were established outside of Jamestown and along the James River.

Jamestown Journal, p. 1

A Letter to Martha

Dear Martha,

Greetings from Jamestown. When you receive this letter it will be nearly two years since we said "good bye" to each other in London. Oh, how life is different! It is easy to see why this is called the "New World." Our new home is comfortable, but it lacks the many comforts we were used to in London.

You asked me to draw you a map and to describe Jamestown in your last letter. Now that I have lived here for a while, I can describe it better.

I must start with the James River. Jamestown is located just a rock's throw from the North bank of the James River. It is a large river, and it flows from the West toward the Atlantic Ocean which is 50 miles to the East. It is wide enough and deep enough for ships to sail all the way from England right to our dock. My father helps the other men load tobacco and unload supplies from ships when they arrive.

Jamestown is not very big. The first settlement at Jamestown was all inside a triangle shaped area surrounded by a high fence made of logs buried on one end. The other end points straight up toward the sky. This is the stockade. My father told me the fence was built to keep wild animals from getting too close, but I have heard other people talk about Indians being the reason why the fence was built. There are mounds with cannons at each corner of the stockade.

I have not had the chance to go out and about very far from the stockade because my mother and father are fearful that something might happen to me. There are woods with wild animals. We are not too far from the Indian village. From time to time, Indians come to trade and visit, but I have not been able to visit their village.

The area around town is low lands with many creeks and springs. This abundance of water creates problems when it rains for very long. Things tend to flood easily when the land is so wet to begin with. Sometimes even drinking water tastes salty. Off to the West, I can see rolling hills leading into the wilderness. The land is covered with many trees and bushes. The bushes produce the most delightful berries I have ever eaten. Some of the forest is being cut down for wood and to clear the land for more farms.

Many people now have their houses outside the fence. Most of the people who live outside the fort are farmers. Some men who work in the pottery shop

and blacksmith shop live in town, but the shops are outside the stockade. The blacksmith shop is near the woods and the pottery is near the river.

We live inside the fence. Every Sunday we go to our beautiful church. The church is taller than the other buildings and is right in the center of the stockade. Our church is not like any I have ever seen in England. It is built of logs. It has a slate roof and a cross on top. My mother told me that the church is not very old and was built by men who came before us. Next to the church is a row of small simple houses. Our house is made of logs, mortar, and thatching on the roof. These buildings are not the best for keeping the cold out. It gets very cold here in the winter.

Our house is just barely large enough for the four of us. It is one room with a loft area covering half the room. My brother Tom and I sleep in the loft. Mother and father sleep below us near the fireplace. This allows father to keep an eye on the fire, so that it does not go out or get too hot. Our neighbors' house burned down last month. Father thinks that their fire got too hot and caught the thatched roof on fire. The house was totally destroyed.

The streets in Jamestown are different from those in London. None of our roads are made with stones or bricks. They are hard packed dirt paths that run between buildings, and lead off towards the farmland at the edge of the forest. In the spring they become very muddy and seem to take forever to dry out. You can just imagine how difficult it is to get around with it being so muddy.

I have to end this letter now or it will miss the Virginia Company ship to England. I am sorry I did not have time to draw a map. Maybe you can draw one from what I have told you.

Your friend,

Virginia Windsor

SCORING

Lesson Two

Teachers participating in the Jamestown Assessment Unit are being asked to score their own students' work. Please score each element of each student book using the scoring methods described below. Score one section at a time and record the scores on the back of the *Jamestown Journals*.

We are asking you to do this for two reasons:

- The Jamestown unit is part of the curriculum and can be used to provide grades.
- Use of a common scoring system will allow you a direct way to compare your students' performance with that of others.

Scoring the Listening Activity

The objective of the listening assessment is twofold: It measures the student's ability to identify items which will help them to draw a map and make an accurate record of those items.

The following items are mentioned in *A Letter to Martha* and worth one point:

Jamestown on north bank of river **(example)**	Packed dirt paths for roads
River flows from west to Atlantic	Paths to farmland at edge of forest
Dock/docks	Forest
Stockade (triangular)	Houses outside of fence
Surrounded by high fence (logs)	Farms
Mounds with cannons at corners	Blacksmith shop near woods, outside
Indian village	Pottery shop near river, outside
Low lands (creeks and streams)	Houses inside stockade
Rolling hills to west	Church

Scale of student performance expectations for listening.

The average student should have a score of 8 or 9. Scores of 9 and above meet expectations for this activity, 12 and above exceed expectations, while below 8 would be considered to be below expectations. The following scale associates the number of correct items with the Anchorage School District's five-point performance scale:

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Items correct	0-1	2-4	5-8	9-12	12-15	16-18

The five-point performance scale was developed to provide a single metric for the presentation of performance assessment results to the public. A score of 0 indicates that a student has not provided scorable work. A score of 1 or 2 indicates that it is an area where the student is developing skills, but has not yet met District expectations. A score of 3 indicates that the student is meeting grade-level performance expectations. A score of 4 or 5 is reserved for those students whose quality of work is beyond that which we would normally expect.

Scoring the Map of Jamestown

It is not expected that the map which students draw will exactly reflect the actual Jamestown settlement. It is expected that students will be able to include a number of the significant features of Jamestown which were discussed in *A Letter to Martha*.

The map should include the eighteen major Jamestown features as indicated above. All maps should include the Map Key, the compass rose (with directions) and completed title. **In order to score above 3, students must have included Map Key, Compass Rose, and Title.** Some of the features are items which should be expected on any map such as the compass rose and key. Score one point for each of the following:

Title
Map Key
Compass Rose (with correct directions)

Jamestown on north bank of river	Packed dirt paths for roads
River flows from west to Atlantic	Paths to farmland at edge of forest
Dock/docks	Forest
Stockade (triangular)	Houses outside of fence
Surrounded by high fence (logs)	Farms
Mounds with cannons at corners	Blacksmith shop near woods, outside
Indian village	Pottery shop near river, outside
Low lands (creeks and streams)	Houses inside stockade
Rolling hills to west	Church

Scale of student performance expectations for map making.

The average student should have a score of 8 or 9. Scores of 8 and above meet expectations for this activity, 13 and above exceed expectations, while 7 and fewer would be considered to be below expectations. The following scale associates the number of correct items with the Anchorage School District's five-point performance scale.

	0	1	2	3	4	5
Items Correct	0-1	2-4	5-7	8-12	13-15	16-21

Lesson Three

London Newspaper

Assessment Elements

Lesson Three is an assessment of reading. The student, working independently, reads a copy of a simulated London newspaper. The articles in this paper reflect what actually might have been written about Colonial Jamestown. The students will read the articles, and respond to questions which assess their ability to recall information and make inferences.

This exercise should not require 2 hours to complete. 20 to 30 minutes should be sufficient, depending on the students' ability. The balance of the period might be used for exploring questions like those posed at the end of the exercise.

Required Material

- *Jamestown Journal* Booklet
- writing materials

Procedures

1. Begin today's class with a review of the Lesson One and Lesson Two activities (introduction to Jamestown and *A Letter to Martha*).

2. Ask students to open their *Jamestown Journals* to **page 7** and read the entire newspaper independently.

3. After reading the newspaper, students should complete the short test on **pages 9 and 10** in their booklets.

4. After students have read the paper, discussion should be held to ensure that students have a basic understanding of what life in Colonial Jamestown was like.

5. Collect the *Jamestown Journals*.

Closure

Review with students the past two day's activities and what they have learned about Colonial Jamestown. You might have students consider if the newspaper gives a good idea of the problems and hardships settlers might face. Any of the questions might serve as a basis for discussion and enrichment. For example, you might want to follow up on the open-ended question and ask students about the changes that they observed.

Scoring Guide, Lesson Three

Newspaper Activity, Part One, Scoring the Reading Response

Scoring is based on number correct in response to the five multiple choice questions.

Correct Answers Are:

1.	**b**	To get land
2.	**b**	Loss of fishing and hunting grounds
3.	**a**	Rebecca Rolfe
4.	**d**	To sell in England
5.	**c**	On a farm

It is expected that students should have 3 of 5 correct. A score of 5 correct is excellent.

Newspaper Activity, Part Two, Open-Ended Response to Reading

Use the Scoring Rubric below to assess the open-ended reading response.

Scoring Rubric, Lesson Three

No Attempt Made (0 points)

The student did not produce any measurable work.

Developing (1-2 points)

Student responded, but the response does not make substantial use of factual information and may not make an inference which directly follows from the information provided.

Basic (3 points)

Student made use of facts from the reading but may not integrate them to support a conclusion. There may be unrelated or unnecessary information included in the response.

Advanced (4-5 points)

Student was proficient in all requirements of the assignment, makes a proper inference based on the information provided, justifies the inference, and demonstrates an exemplary quality of work. No unrelated or unnecessary information is included in the response.

Lesson Four

American Archaeologist

Students use photos of actual artifacts from the National Park Service at Jamestown. Students play the role of archaeologists to determine what the artifact is, how it was used, and where it might have been found.

Assessment Elements

- Students examine and classify historical artifacts.
- Students write catalog descriptions of the artifacts and describe their use.
- Students work in groups to develop conclusions based on inferences which may be made from their artifacts.
- Students have the opportunity to see how archaeologists use artifacts to help to understand how people lived in the past.

Materials:

- Artifact Example Package (Teacher)
- *Jamestown Journals*
- Artifact Packages (5 Envelopes: green, blue, yellow, salmon, and tan)

Procedures:

1. Pass out *Jamestown Journals*. Review the activities of the past few days: *A Letter to Martha,* the map of Jamestown, and the *New World News.* Emphasize the relations between Jamestown and England and the changing nature of the colony as it moved from a small settlement to a larger farming community with outlying plantations and the development of small industries -- pottery, blacksmithing.

   Explain that the lesson today will use another source of historical information -- artifacts. When we are able to read a letter or a diary, we are able to hear the voice of a person from the time we study. When we are able to read a newspaper, we are able to hear the voice of a person who is telling us about something that happened, but might not have actually been involved in the event. When we look at an artifact, we see something that people actually used and may get a better idea of how people lived.

   After the review of the previous Jamestown activities, you may wish to talk to the class about "archaeologists" and the concept of "artifacts." In doing so, use your own examples.

Upon the completion of the review, you should demonstrate the procedure of cataloging an artifact using the cataloging sheet from the artifact example package. Walk the student through the procedure they will have to use in cataloging.

2. Introduce the group exercise.

   - Students should be divided into groups of about five or 6. There should not be more students than artifacts in an individual group.

   - Each group should get a package which contains a map and color coded artifacts: salmon (8 artifacts–store); blue (9–home); tan (6–blacksmith's shop); green (5–pottery shop); and yellow (6–armory).

   - Each student should choose an artifact and complete the catalog sheet on **page 11** of the *Jamestown Journal*.

   - When all have completed their catalogue sheets, the group should discuss the artifacts and decide which site is the most likely source of the artifacts. They should be able to defend their choice of a site. All group members should complete the group response sheet on **pages 12 and 13** in their booklets.

3. Closing Activity. You have some options here for debriefing the groups and getting individuals to share what they have discovered and concluded about Jamestown in the 1600s from their artifacts.

   Here are our ideas:

   - Draw a rough map of Jamestown for the students with the locations of the various places where artifacts were found. Then have each group report what they had as artifacts and the location they chose as the most likely site as the source for their artifacts. Ask each group to support the reason that the site they selected should be considered the right location.

   - Return to the classification/catalog sheets. Examine the various choices and have the class as a group tell you about each item –

     - Was it made in America or made in Europe?
     - Was it used by Indians or used by Colonists? (or both?)
     - Was it a personal item or tool used for work? (or both?)
     - Is it similar to an item used today?

4. Prepare the students for the writing exercise which will start either later in the day or tomorrow. You might want the students to look through their own possessions or around their home and think about what articles

would be most helpful to them if they were living in Jamestown. Collect *Jamestown Journals*.

Scoring Guide, Lesson Four

In general, students are expected to be able to:

1) complete the catalog sheets making the proper classification of the material, origin, and use of their artifact, and

2) complete a written description which identifies the artifact and describes how it might have been used at Jamestown.

After the group discussion, the students should be able to give three reasons why the site they selected was the most likely location where their artifacts were found.

Ten points total are possible for this lesson. **Five points** are assigned for successful completion of the archaeological cataloging sheet. **Up to five additional points** are assigned based on the following items from the group discussion portion of the activity:

- 1 point assigned for properly identifying the individual item.
- 1 point assigned for properly identifying the item location.
- 1 point each assigned for providing good reasons for the choice of location (3 points possible).

Lesson Five

A GIFT FOR VIRGINIA

In this lesson, students select an item to take back to historical Jamestown, prepare an archaeological catalogue entry, write an essay, participate in a peer review, and prepare a final, revised draft. The writing assessment will require about four class periods to administer across two or three days.

- Part One, approximately one class period of 50 minutes, will be used for pre-writing activities and first draft writing.
- Part Two, a second period of similar length will be used for peer review and for planning revisions to the first draft.
- Part Three, will be used for revision and production of the final product.

Students are expected to work together as part of the peer review process. During the writing of the final draft, however, students must work independently. Students should be allowed to use a dictionary, thesaurus, or other texts during the first draft and final draft writing. Discussion and help from others can be allowed if the writing remains the individual's own.

Students have a peer review check list to use in reviewing each other's papers. Organize the students in pairs for the activity. If you have an odd number of students in your classroom, form a group of three or work with the remaining student yourself.

It is important that the writer and reviewer discuss the paper with each other. The student is to take the critique and his/her own responses to the review questions as information to use in determining the revisions that are appropriate for the paper. The final draft is to be the product of the thoughts provided in the review process and the student's reactions to those thoughts.

Assessment Elements

- Student chooses an artifact and completes classification form.
- Student writes a draft essay describing the chosen artifact.
- Students participate in peer review activities.
- Students revise essay, producing a final draft.

Procedures

Part One

1. Announce the writing assignment. Return *Jamestown Journals*.

2. Students choose the objects they will write about in the lesson. They should be encouraged to choose an object which would be useful to the people of the Jamestown Colony.

3. Working alone, each student should complete the Item from the Future catalogue entry for the chosen item on **page 15** of the *Jamestown Journal*.

4. Ask students to complete pre-writing, brainstorming activities. Some will want to write outlines. Some will use webs. Others will write notes. Use whatever pre-writing or brainstorming activities you would commonly use as part of your writing instruction. Partner work or small group work is encouraged.

5. Have students write their rough drafts on **pages 17 and 18** of their journals.

Part Two

- Form pairs of students. Have the students read each other's papers and complete the review sheet on **page 19** of their journals. Students should work together to improve the quality of their drafts.

- Conclude the activity by collecting the journals and asking the students to begin thinking about the reviews and revisions they would like to make to their papers in the next class period.

Part Three

Distribute the journals. Ask students to plan their revisions to their papers, and fill out the writer review form on **page 20**. This activity should consume a half hour or less.

After students have discussed revisions with their partners and planned the changes they want to make, they should write their final drafts on **pages 21 and 22**. Final drafts to be written without discussion.

Lesson Five

Scoring the Analytic Writing Assessment

There are three parts to the scoring of Lesson Five:

- 5 points are assigned for completing the steps of the lesson,
- 5 points for participation in the review process, including meaningful editing of the paper, and
- 5 points for the finished paper, evaluated in terms of ideas and content and writing conventions.

Part One:

On the scoring sheet on the last page of the Jamestown Journal, check off completed steps in the lesson, assigning two points for each (5 points possible).

Part Two:

a. Credit the student with 5 points for involvement with all stages of the peer review process.

b. Then, evaluate the level of change between the rough and final drafts as a result of the peer editing process. Take into account not only a comparison of the two papers, but also the comments of the reviewer and the writer's responses. Score according to the following scale:

0	1	2	3	4	5
No Change	Little Change	Mininal	Some	Marked	Substantial
		———————	Improvement	———————	

Part Three:

For ease in grading, traits from the Alaska Analytical Reading Guide have been collapsed into two umbrella areas: "Ideas and Content" and "Writing Conventions". The final drafts are to be scored five points each for these elements. Carefully read through the enclosed pages from the Analytical Rating Guide, to understand how these areas are to be rated. It may be helpful for you to highlight or underline some key words or phrases that will serve as quick reference as you are scoring the students' final drafts.

Once you have done that and you are familiar with what the areas are, you are ready to read papers.

Remember that you read for one area at a time, and score in that area only. Then read the paper for the next area, and score for that area only. After reading a number of papers, you may find that the scores for a particular paper may tend to cluster across the areas being rated, and you may decide you are able to consider more than one area while reading the paper. Be careful to check the guidelines, however, to double check the accuracy of your analysis. Each trait should be scored independently.

Points to keep in mind for analytical rating:

The analytical scoring can be reliable and valid if we follow a few simple procedures:

Read all papers silently. Remember, all students deserve your undivided attention and talent in order to receive the mark their efforts earned.

Read and re-read the rubric frequently. Keep the rubric next to you as you read for each trait. Take notes on your rubric that will help you keep the criteria for each score firmly in mind as you read.

The rubrics for each writing trait follow. Each is printed on a single page to make it easier to consider only the critical characteristics of that trait as you score.

If a score should be between a 1 (Beginning) and 3 (Basic) or a 3 and 5 (Advanced), give a 2 (Developing) or 4 (Proficient), respectively. We have found that thinking about 2 or 4 as "in between" scores makes the task somewhat easier.

Enter your ratings on both traits at the bottom of the final draft page.

Expected scores are three or better. Three is basic, four is advanced, and five is proficient. Four is a good score. Five is excellent work of unusually high quality.

If you would like to know more about analytic scoring of writing, here are two suggestions.

- Read Creating Writers: Linking Assessment and Writing Instruction; Spandel, Vicki and Stiggins, Richard J..
- Sign up as a reader for the Alaska State Writing Assessment. National experts often do the training and one or two graduate credits are available.

Ideas and Content

5 Advanced

- This paper is clear in purpose and conveys ideas in an interesting, original manner that holds the reader's attention. Clear, relevant examples, anecdotes, or details develop and enrich the central idea or ideas.
- The writer organizes material in a way that enhances the reader's understanding, or that helps to develop a central idea or theme. The order may be conventional or not, but the sequence is effective and moves the reader through the paper.
- The paper bears the unmistakable stamp of the individual writer. The writer speaks directly to the reader, and seems sincere, candid, and committed to the topic. The overall effect is individualistic, expressive, and engaging; this paper stands out from the others.
- The writer consistently selects words that convey the intended message in an interesting, precise, and natural way. The result is full and rich, yet concise; every word carries its own weight.

3 Basic

- The writer's purpose is reasonably clear; however, the overall result may not be especially captivating. Support is less than adequate to fully develop the main idea(s).
- The writer attempts to organize ideas and details cohesively, but the resulting pattern may be somewhat unclear, ineffective, or awkward. Although the reader can generally follow what's being said, the organizational structure may seem at times to be forced, obvious, incomplete, or ineffective.
- The writer makes an honest effort to deal with the topic, but without a strong sense of personal commitment or involvement. The result is often pleasant or acceptable, yet not striking or compelling in a way that draws the reader in.
- The writer's word choice is adequate to convey meaning, but the language is quite ordinary. The writer doesn't seem to be reaching for the "best' way to say something, but often settles for the first word or phrase that comes to mind. The result is a sort of "generic paper" that sounds familiar, routine, or commonplace.

1 Developing

- This paper lacks a central idea of purpose–or the central idea can be inferred by the reader only because he or she knows the topic (question asked).
- Organization is haphazard and disjointed. The writing shows little or no sense of progression or direction. Examples, details, or events seem unrelated to any certain idea, or may be strung together helter-skelter with no apparent pattern.
- The writer may not have understood the assignment, or may simply have felt indifferent toward the topic. As a result, no clear voice emerges. The result is flat, lifeless, very mechanical and stilted, or possibly inappropriate.
- The writer is struggling with a limited vocabulary, often groping for words and phrases to convey meaning. Meaning may be difficult to determine (e.g., the writer says one thing but *seems* to mean another), or else the language is so vague and abstract that only the broadest, most general sorts of messages are conveyed. Words tend to be consistently dull, colorless, and trite. There is virtually no effort to try what's new.

5 **Advanced**

- The writer has a good grasp of standard writing conventions (grammar, capitalization, punctuation, usage, spelling, paragraphing). There are no glaring errors. In fact, errors tend to be so minor that reader can easily overlook them unless searching for them specifically.
- The paper is fluid, and reads easily throughout. It has an easy-on-the-ear flow and rhythm when read aloud. Sentences tend to be mature and sophisticated for grade level, with a strong and varied structure that makes reading enjoyable. Varied sentence structure and length add interest.

3 **Basic**

- Errors in writing conventions begin to impair readability. Sentence structure is generally correct on simple sentences, though more complicated patterns may contain such problems as faulty parallelism, inconsistent tense, voice shift (e.g., first to second person), dangling modifiers, or vague pronoun reference.
- The paper is understandable, but the sentences tend to be mechanical rather than fluid. Standard English syntax is generally used, but while sentence structure is usually correct, it is not characterized by a natural fluency and grace. Occasional minor flaws or awkward constructions may necessitate re-reading.

1 **Developing**

- There are so many errors in usage, sentence structure, spelling, and/or punctuation that the paper is hard to understand.
- The paper is often difficult to understand and difficult to read aloud. Sentences tend to be choppy, incomplete, or so rambling and irregular that it may be hard to tell where one should end and the next begin.

EARLY JAMESTOWN

Teacher's Background Materials

Acknowledgment

Teacher background materials are drawn from the National Center for History in the Schools., Los Angeles, California.

Early Jamestown

The English settlement of North America began in earnest on April 26, 1607, when three small ships sighted what is now Cape Henry, Virginia. On board were 104 adventurers who hoped to emulate Spanish conquistadores like Cortez and Pizarro. After several weeks spent exploring the Chesapeake Bay, they settled on the site that would become Jamestown and began erecting a fort and dwellings.

From the beginning, English colonization in North America was essentially different from the Spanish model. Spanish colonization was capitalized, organized, and operated by the crown; the Jamestown settlement was funded by a private joint-stock company, the Virginia Colony of London, founded by merchants. Despite featuring the Christian conversion of natives prominently in its charter, the Company's real aim was profit. The Virginia Company hoped to find gold or other valuable minerals, locate a Northwest passage to Asia, trade with the indigenous population, and, if feasible, harness them into a pliant labor force as the Spanish and Portuguese had done. But the conditions of Virginia, the lack of precious minerals and a less dense, more broadly dispersed population, made the Spanish model inappropriate. Moreover, Spanish imperialism was supported with funds and soldiers from the government and hundreds of priests from the Catholic church. The Virginia Company did not have such resources.

For many years, the extraction of wealth, rather than settlement, remained the principal goal of the adventurers who came to Jamestown. There were no women among the first settlers, and for decades after its founding women were greatly under-represented. Even into the eighteenth century, a hundred years after the founding, there were three men for every two women.

Among the first three groups from England to arrive in Jamestown, gentlemen comprised a third of the number, a proportion six times greater than in England. By definition, gentlemen had no manual skills and could not be expected to do ordinary labor. Their class background and education prepared them only for service in the military or legal professions. But because the military and legal professions were already overrepresented in the colony, many gentlemen were unemployed and resorted to squabbling, gaming or drinking. This was not an ideal situation for the rigors of colonization, but the Company had little choice except to take such people; they were the ones who wanted to come and could afford to pay their way.

The curious mix of settlers, with notions of colonization unsuitable for the land and resisted by the people they found in Virginia, meant that for many years Jamestown's survival was extremely precarious. Unwilling to farm or do the other mundane physical tasks essential for survival, these soldiers of fortune relied on England and Indians for food. But the supplies from England were

often spoiled or hoarded, and obtaining food from the Indians was contingent on the extremely variable state of Indian-settler relations. Aware that the colonists could not survive on their own, John Smith had sought to force trade with the Powhatans by intimidation. At times raiding and destroying their fields and villages to extort food and supplies, Smith engaged in practices which had the same adverse impact on the English settlers as on the Powhatans. Combined with often foul, brackish drinking water, an unfamiliar climate, and marshy terrain, these self-defeating behaviors led to a staggering mortality rate. Of the over 900 European settlers to arrive between 1607 and 1609, only 59 survived to the spring of 1610.

If Captain John Smith had not taken command of the settlers and established a sort of military regimen requiring that settlers work for food, the colony might well have failed. After Smith left, his example was followed by others who established strict laws to regulate conduct. But even this order imposed upon the settlers would not have preserved England's first colony had not some sort of profit making venture been found.

A host of different enterprises had been unsuccessfully undertaken before John Rolfe managed to raise a West Indian strain of tobacco. In 1614 he laid the basis for a viable economy and began the English-Virginian tobacco trade by sending four barrels of tobacco to England. By 1624 Virginia was annually exporting 200,000 pounds of tobacco, and by 1638 the amount had risen to 3,000,000 pounds. Despite James I's attempts to discourage the use of tobacco, its popularity gave Virginia a period of sustained growth.

In 1618 it was still not clear to the London Company that tobacco would be a profitable commodity for trade. As the company teetered on the edge of bankruptcy, it tried to entice new settlers to Virginia by offering 50 acres to anyone who paid his own way or the way of anyone else. The company also tried to improve Virginia's government in 1619 by adopting English common law and a more representative resident government. Thus was born the House of Burgesses. Even when in 1624 the crown seized the London Company's charter, and the new king Charles I proclaimed Virginia a royal colony, Virginia continued to be governed in accordance with procedures set up by the company.

Because culturing tobacco was extremely labor intensive, Virginia needed an abundance of cheap labor. Planters recruited workers primarily from the armies of displaced peasants and destitute city dwellers in England and Ireland. Thousands of desperate people sold themselves into servitude for three to seven years in order to secure passage to the New World. Since they were mostly young, between the ages of 15 and 24, and almost three-fourths male, they hoped that after their servitude they could establish their own farms. But for most, this hope was never realized. Of the 9,000 immigrants who voyaged to Virginia between 1610 and 1622, only 2,000 survived the period. As few as one in 20 of these people, called indentured servants, managed to achieve freedom and

acquire land. Not only were these servants subject to the same malarial fevers and dysentery that depleted the ranks of planters, they were also subject to harsh work routines by masters who treated them with little regard to their humanity. The brutal treatment of indentured servants anticipated, and partially prepared society for, the eventual transition to slave labor.

While tobacco gave the colony an economic basis for survival, it sharpened the already abrasive relations between European colonizers and the Powhatan tribes of the Chesapeake. From the beginning, relations between the colonizers and Native Americans were marked by ambivalence, suspicion, and frequent violence. Continuous contact did not bring understanding. The English were inclined to see their technological advantages as proof of their inherent superiority, while the Indians found the Europeans extremely militaristic.

But this very quality inspired Powhatan, the canny leader of several dozen of the 40 small tribes in the Chesapeake region, to propose an alliance with the English. He saw in the English a potential ally who could help him retain and extend his control in the tidewater area and limit the threat of his western enemies. For this reason he repeatedly provided crucial relief for the English during their initial years of struggle. Yet the Indians of the Chesapeake were also aware of the English designs on their land. The economic success of tobacco brought increasing pressure for land. In 1617, when Opechancanough replaced Powhatan as head of the Chesapeake tribes, he concluded that the English encroachment must be halted. An epidemic which decimated the Powhatan tribes between 1617 and 1619 added to his sense of urgency. On March 22, 1622 Opechancanough launched a well-planned attack on the English of Virginia which resulted in the death of nearly a third of the immigrants. But the Indians, with their numbers reduced by disease, were no match for the English. Despite a recognition by many of the settlers of the causes of Indian hostility, this massacre provided the motivation to wage a ruthless war of extermination against the Indians. Although there was nothing inevitable about the course of Indian-settler relations in Virginia, the English land-hunger was a major contributing factor to recurrent hostilities.

The First Residents of Jamestown

Those who remained when the ships returned to England after the settlement had been established.

Adling (or Adding) Henry ..... Gentleman
Alicock, Jeremy (or Jerome) ..... Gentleman
Archer, Gabriel ..... Captain, Gentleman
Asbie, John .....
Beast, Benjamin ..... Gentleman
Behethland, (or Betheland), Robert ..... Gentleman
Brinto (or Brinton), Edward ..... Mason, Soldier
Brookes, Edward ..... Gentleman
Brookes, John ..... Gentleman
Browne, Edward ..... Gentleman
Brumfield, James ..... Boy
Bruster (or Brewster), William ..... Gentleman
Buckler, Andrew .....
Capper, John .....
Cassen (or Cawsen), George ..... Laborer
Cassen, Thomas ..... Laborer
Cassen, William ..... Laborer
Clovil, Ustis (Eustace) ..... Gentleman
Collier, Samuell ..... Boy
Cooke, Roger ..... Gentleman
Couper, (or Cowper), Thomas ..... Barber
Crofts, Richard ..... Gentleman
Waller John ..... Gentleman
Dier (or Dye), William .....
Dixon, Richard ..... Gentleman
Dods, John ..... Laborer, Soldier
Edward, Ould ..... Laborer
Emry, Thomas ..... Carpenter
Fenton, Robert ..... Gentleman
Flower, George ..... Gentleman
Ford, Robert ..... Gentleman
Frith, Richard ..... Gentleman
Galthorpe, Stephen ..... Gentleman
Garret, William ..... Bricklayer
Golding (or Goulding), George ..... Laborer
Gore, Thomas ..... Gentleman
Gosnold, Anthony ..... Gentleman
Gosnoll, Anthony ..... Gentleman
Gosnold, Bartholomew ..... Councilor, Captain

248

The First Residents of Jamestown
(continued)

Gower, Thomas.....Gentleman
Halthorpe, Stephen.....Gentleman
Harrington, Edward.....Gentleman
Herd, John.....Bricklayer
Houlgrave, Nicholas.....Gentleman
Hunt, John.....Bricklayer
Walker, George.....Gentleman
Jacob, Thomas.....Sargeant
Johnson, William.....Laborer
Kendall, George.....Captain, Councilor
Kingston (or Kinistone), Ellis.....Gentleman
Laxton, William.....Carpenter
Laydon, John.....Laborer, Carpenter
Loue (or Love), William.....Tailor, Soldier
Martin, John.....Gentleman
Martin, George.....Gentleman
Martin, John.....Captain, Councilor
Midwinter, Francis.....Gentleman
Morish (or Morris), Edward.....Gentleman,
.....Corporal
Morton, Matthew.....Sailor
Mounslic, Thomas.....
Mounton, Thomas.....
Mullon, Richard.....Boy
Peacock, Nathaniel.....Boy
Penington, John.....Gentleman
Percy, George.....Gentleman
Pickhouse, Dru.....Gentleman
Posing, Edward.....Carpenter
Powell, Nathaniel.....Gentleman
Webbe, Thomas.....Gentleman
Profit, Jonas.....Sailor, Fisher, Soldier
Radcliffe, John.....Captain, Councilor
Reed, James.....Captain, Councilor
Robinson, John (or Jehu).....Gentleman
Rods, Williams.....Laborer
Sands, Thomas.....Gentleman
Short, John.....Gentleman
Simons, Richard.....Gentleman
Skot, (or Skott), Nicholas.....Drummer
Small, Robert.....Carpenter
Smethes, William.....Gentleman

The First Residents of Jamestown
(continued)

Smith, John ..... Captain, Councilor
Smarsbrough, Francis ..... Gentleman
Stevenson, John ..... Gentleman
Studley (or Stoodis), Thomas ..... Gentleman
Tarkard, William ..... Gentleman
Tasin, Henry ..... Gentleman
Throgmorton, Kellam ..... Gentleman
Tockill, Anas ..... Soldier
Vnger (or Unger), William ..... Laborer
White, William ..... Laborer
Wilkinson, William ..... Surgeon
Wingfield, EdwardMaria ..... Master
..... Councilor, President
Watson, Thomas ..... Gentleman, Surgeon
..... a Dutchman "with divers others, in the number of 105."

Mariners and Others Known to Have Been With the Expedition that Established Jamestown on May 15, 1607.

Browne, Oliver .....
Clarke, Charles .....
Collson, John ..... Mariner
Cotson, John ..... Mariner
Crookdeck, John .....
Deals, Jeremy .....
Fytch, Mathew ..... Mariner
Genoway, Richard .....
Godword, Thomas .....
Jackson, Robert .....
Markham, Robert .....
Nellson, Francys .....
Poole, Jonas .....
Skynner, Thomas .....
Turnbrydge, (or Turnbridge), Thomas .....
Newport, Christopher ..... Captain, Councilor
Tyndall, Robert ..... Mariner, Gunner
White, Benjamyn .....
Danyell .....
Stephen .....

There were 144 persons in the expedition including those (105) who remained in Virginia.

250

Accounts of the Early Years of the Jamestown Settlement

"It pleased God after awhile, to send those people which were our mortall enemies to releeve us with such victuals, as Bread, Corne, Fish, and Flesh in great plentie, which was the setting up of our feeble men, otherwise wee had all perished. Also we were frequented by divers Kings in the Countrie, bringing us store of provision to our great comfort."

Excerpted from "George Percy's Account of the Voyage to Virginia and the Colony's First Days" Jamestown Voyages. Ed. Barbout. Vol. 1

"What by their crueltie, our Governours indiscretion, and the losse of our ships, of five hundred within six moneths after Captain Smiths departure {October 1609-March 1610}, there remained not past sixtie, men, women and children.

This was that time, which still to this day {1624} we call the starving time; it were too vile to say, and scarce to be beleeved, what we endured; but the occasion our owne, for want of providence industrie and government, and not the barrennesse and defect of the Countrie, as is generally supposed;"

Excerpted from Travels and Works of Captain John Smith. Ed. Edward Arber, F..S.A. Vol 2 Edinburgh: John Grant, 1910.

"It was the spaniards good hap to happen upon those parts where were infinite numbers of people, whoe had manured the ground with that providence that it afforded victuall at all times; and time had brought them to that perfoection {that} they had the use of gold and silver, and {of} the most of such commodities as their countries affoorded: so that what the Spaniard got was only the spoile and pillage of those countrie people, and not the labours of their owne hands.

But had those fruitfull Countries beene as Salvage {i.e., savage}, as barbarous, as ill-peopled, as little planted laboured and manured, as Virginia; their proper labours, it is likely would have produced as small a profit as ours."

Excerpted from The Proceedings fo the English Colonie in Virginia Since Their First Beginning. By William Simmonds. Oxford, 1612.

Jamestown Journal, p. 3

TWO LETTERS FROM VIRGINIA

[John Pory to Sir Dudley Carleton, September 30, 1619]

...All our riches for the present doe consiste in Tobacco, wherein one man by his owne labour hath in one yeare raised himselfe to the value of 200£ sterling; and yet another by meanes of sixe servants hath cleared at one crop a thousand pound English (i.e., £1,000). These be true, yet indeed rare examples, yet possible to be doen by others. Our principall wealth (I should have said) consisteth in servants: But they are chardgeable to be furnished with armes, apparell, and bedding and for their transportation and casual (expenses), both at sea, and for their first yeare commonly at lande also: But if they escape (death), they prove very hardy, and sound able men.

Nowe that your lordship may knowe, that we are not the veriest beggers in the worlde, our cowekeeper here of James citty on Sundays goes accowtered all in freshe flaming silke; and a wife of one that in England had professed the black arte, not of a scholler, but of a collier of Croydon, weares her rough bever hatt with a faire perle hatband, and a silken suite thereto correspondent.

Excerpted from Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625. Original Narratives of Early American History. Ed. Lyon Gardiner Tyler. New Your, 1907. (pp. 284-285).

[Richard Frethorne to his parents, March 20, April 2, 3, 1623]

Loveing and kind father and mother my most humble duty remembered to you hopeing in God of your good health, as I my selfe am at the makeing hereof, this is to let you understand that I your Child am in a most heavie Case by reason of the nature of the Country is such that it Causeth much sicknes... We must Worke hard both earelie, and late for a messe of water gruell, and a mouthfull of bread, and beife(.) a mouthfull of bread for a pennie loafe must serve for 4 men which is most pitifull if you did knowe as much as I, when people crie out day, and night, Oh that they were in England without their lymbes and would not care to loose anie lymbe to be in England againe, yea though they beg from doore to doore... I have notheing at all, no not a shirt to my backe, but two Ragges nor no Clothes, but one poore suite, nor but one paire of shooes, but one pare of stockins, but one Capp, but two bands, my Cloke is stollen by one of my owne fellows, and to his dying hower would not tell mee what he did with it...but I am not halfe a quarter so strong as I was in England, and all is for want of victualls, for I doe protest unto you, that I have eaten more in a day at home then I have allowed me here for a Weeke...

O thet you did see may (i.e., my) daylie and hourelie sighes, grones, and teares, and thumpes that I afford mine owne brest, and rue and Curse the time of my birth with holy Job. I thought no head had beene able to hold so much water as hath and doth dailie flow from mine eyes.

Excerpted from Edward Waterhouse, The Records of the Virginia Company of London. By Edward Waterhouse, Ed. Susan Myra Kingsbury. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1906-1935. Spelling has been standardized.

MODERN VERSION OF TWO LETTERS FROM VIRGINIA

John Pory to Sir Dudley Carleton, 1619

...All our wealth comes from tobacco. One man, by himself, was able to raise enough tobacco to earn 200 pounds sterling [a huge amount of money for the time, like earning $200,000]. Another person with six servants was able to get 1000 pounds sterling from his tobacco crop. While such examples are rare, they are true and show that such wealth is possible. I should have said our main source of wealth is servants. We have to pay all their expenses, like food and clothes. But if they survive, they are good workers.

Just so you know that we are not the poorest people in the world, even Jamestown's cowkeeper [a low paying job] dresses in red silk clothes. And the wife of a man who was only a coal miner in England has a beaver hat with a hatband made of pearls. She wears this hat with her expensive dress.

§ § § § § § § § § § § §

Richard Frethorne to his parents, 1623

Loving and kind Father and Mother, I hope to God you are healthy as I am. I am writing to let you know how awful I feel about being in Virginia, a place which causes sickness...

We must work hard from morning until night for watery soup and a mouthful of bread and beef. A mouthful of bread from a penny loaf must be shared by four people. You would understand our sad and unfortunate situation if you could hear the people crying day and night like I do. They pray they were in England and would be willing to cut off an arm or a leg to get there–even if they had to beg from door to door. I have nothing, not even a shirt on my back. I wear rags, not clothes. I have underwear, stockings, shoes, and a hat, but no change of clothes. One of the fellows I work with stole my cloak. But even as he died, he refused to tell me what he had done with it.

I am eight times weaker than I was in England and all because I never have enough to eat. I swear that I used to eat more in a day at home than I am allowed to eat in a week here.

Oh, I wish you could see how I constantly sigh, groan, cry, and beat my breast. Like holy Job, I regret and curse my birth. I thought no human hear could hold the amount of water I see daily flowing from my eyes.

APPENDIX K

EXCELS Advisory Committee

George Beck, Teacher, ASD, Wonder Park Elementary

Kathryn Byerly, Teacher, ASD, Ptarmigan Elementary

Diana Caldwell, Education Dept., Alaska Pacific University

Marion Elliot, Teacher, ASD, Mountain View Elementary

Judith Entwife, Language Arts Specialist, Alaska State Dept. of Education

Diane Etter, Vice President, Curriculum & Instruction, Anchorage Central Council of PTA's

Bill Faulkner, Assembly Member, Municipality of Anchorage

Kathy Gillespie, President, Anchorage Central Council of PTA's

Dorothea Groth, Teacher, ASD, K-12 Alternative School

Ernie Hall, Chairman, Chamber of Commerce Education Committee

Tony Harduar, Principal, ASD, Bowman Elementary

Steve Haycox, Professor, History Department, UAA

Joyce Honeychurch, Associate Professor, University of Alaska, Anchorage

Theresa Johnson, Executive Director Personnel, ASD

Shannon Jones, Principal, ASD, Ocean View Elementary

Eileen Jordan, Teacher, ASD, Fairview Elementary

Julie Maker, teacher, ASD, Sand Lake Elementary

Alex McNeal, Dean, School of Education, University of Alaska, Anchorage

Wayne Miller, Dean, College of Arts & Sciences, UAA

Robyn Rehmann, Executive Director, ASD, Special Education

Sue Ryan, Teacher, ASD, Government Hill Elementary

Janice Schnorr, Interim Dean, School of Education, UAA

Bob Silverman, Administrator, Office of Standards & Assessment, Alaska Dept. of Education

Philip Volland, Attorney, Rice, Volland, Gleason & Taylor, P.C.

Howard Weaver, Editor, Anchorage Daily News

Kathy Wilson, Supervisor, Title 1, ASD

Representative from ASD Minority Education Concerns Committee, selected by the MECC through an established process.

APPENDIX L

Institute Bibliography

Brooks, Jacqueline and Brooks, Martin. In Search for Understanding: The Case for Constructivist Classrooms. Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 1993.

Bradley Commission on History in Schools. Building a History Curriculum: Guidelines for Teaching History in Schools. 1988.

Gagnon, Paul ed. Historical Literacy: The Case For History in American Education. Boston, Houghton Mifflin Company, 1989.

Jorgensen, Karen. History Workshop: Reconstructing the Past with Elementary Students. Portsmouth, N.H: Heinemann, 1993.

"Primary Voices K-6: The First Year Collection". National Council of Teachers of English, 1994.

Short, Kathy G. and Burke, Carolyn. Creating Curriculum: Teachers and Students as a Community of Learners. Portsmouth, N. H.: Heinemann, 1991.

Steffey, Stephanie and Hood, Wendy eds. If This is Social Studies, Why Isn't it Boring? York, ME: Stenhouse, 1994.

Tschudi, Stephen. Travels Across the Curriculum: Models for Interdisciplinary Learning. New York: Scholastic, 1991.

Tunnel, Michael and Ammon, Richard , eds. The Story of Ourselves: Teaching History Through Children's Literature. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993.

Zelmelman, Steven, Daniels, Harvey and Hyde, Arthur. Best Practice: New Standards for Teaching and Learning in America's Schools. Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1993.

Standards:

Alaska 2000 Standards, Language Arts, History, Civics/Government, Geography, 1994.

Geography for Life: National Geography Standards, Geography Education Standards Project, 1994.

National Standards for Civics and Government. Center for Civic Education, 1994.

National Standards for History for Grades K-4: Expanding Children's World in Time and Space. National Center for History in the Schools, 1994.

Standards for the English Language Arts. International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English, 1995.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

b. 3 credits total.

c. Contact hours: 45 hours of contact time with nationally known lecturers and local facilitator/teachers.

d. N/A

e. Course designed for practicing teachers in the K-6 schools. It is assumed that participants are already certified and have familiarity with current ASD program. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders.

This course is not intended to meet under-graduate degree requirements.

f. This course offering represents a collaboration among the Anchorage School District's Social Studies Program, Language Arts Program, and the School of Education at the University of Alaska Anchorage. The course is offered on a one-time, self-support basis.

g. NA

II. **ACTIVITIES:** (types of strategies you will use in class)

This class (institute) will utilize a variety of instructional methods and will parallel methods that are desirable in K-6 classrooms.

•**individual inquiry:** Participants will engage in investigating their own inquiry cycle through the identification of their own questions.

•**group discussion and task groups:** Participants will participate in frequent discussions of professional materials and lectures as well as their own inquiry.

•**lectures:** Visiting lecturers will address each of the focus topics for the institute in formal lectures.

•**workshops:** Teachers will engage in formal and informal workshop activities with both visiting lecturers and local instructor/facilitators.

•**reading:** Extensive reading of professional materials will be required.

•**writing:** Participants will engage in both informal and formal writing activities. Learning logs and response papers will be required. In addition, each participant will engage in their own inquiry/research project that will be written up as a research project or formal professional article for publication.

III. **Prerequisite:**

Valid Alaska teaching certificate.
Previous participation in Part I and Part II of this sequence is required.
Full time teaching status with the Anchorage School District preferred.

a. NA

b. Assumption is that participants are already certified and have familiarity with current language arts and social studies content and methods. This institute is intended to address the on-going professional learning needs of teacher leaders and is directed to teachers who are highly motivated and willing to be risk takers..

c. NA

d. May satisfy elective requirements for Masters level study depending on School of Education approval for individuals.

e. No other formal prerequisites.

IV. **Evaluation:** (how will you evaluate the students)

a. Grading will be done on the basis of

•student presentations of inquiry in process;
•learning logs and reflective papers;
•participation in professional discussions and workshops;
•completion of required professional readings;
•completion of personal research project with paper or article.

Grading Criteria:

•Class attendance at all sessions.....20 points
•Participation in discussions.....20 points
•Completion of required readings as evidenced through learning logs and journals.....20 points
•Research paper describing in detail the research question explored, data collection procedures, and subjects.....30 points
•Sharing of work in research work-in-progress.....10 points

Grades:

100-90 points.....A
89-80 points.....B
79-70 points.....C
69-60 points.....D
59 or less points.....F

V. **COURSE OUTLINE:**

January-February, 1996:

Total of fifteen hours of intensive interaction with national speakers in the area of history intended to introduce participants the national standards in this area and to explore curricular implications and linkages. Further, this session will continue the exploration into teachers' instructional questions relevant to classroom practice utilizing the new themes and standards.

February-March 1996:

Total of fifteen hours with local teacher-leaders in research groups to begin intensive investigation through inquiry process and procedure into teaching within the framework of national standards.

April-May, 1996:

Total of fifteen hours of intensive interaction with national speakers in the area of English/language arts intended to introduce participants the national

standards in this area and to explore curricular implications and linkages. Further, this session will continue the exploration into teachers' instructional questions relevant to classroom practice utilizing the new themes and standards.

VI. INSTRUCTIONAL GOALS AND DEFINED OUTCOMES:

Goals:

- to understand the inquiry process as a method of increasing professional knowledge and practice;
- to understand the impact of teacher philosophy and belief system on classroom planning;
- to gain content knowledge in the areas of geography, civics, and history and apply such knowledge to classroom practice consistent with learning theory;
- to understand methods for enhancing thinking skills in the classroom;
- to set up learning environments that reflect creative thinking environments;
- to investigate speaking, listening, reading, and writing as ways of clarifying knowledge and thinking;
- to explore reading and writing as vehicles for exploring professional beliefs and practices;
- to investigate the implications of theory in the classroom.

Outcomes:

- demonstrate content knowledge and theory relevant to the teaching of geography, civics, history, writing and literature;
- be able to articulate own philosophy of teaching and to cite educational researchers who support those beliefs;
- be able to set up an inquiry cycle in own classroom;
- utilize learning logs, reflective writing and response to literature in own classroom;
- complete own research process;
- complete a research-based paper, unit, or article based on personal research study.